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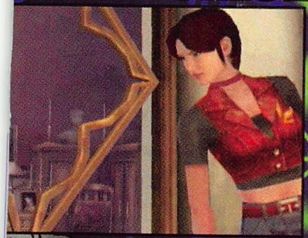
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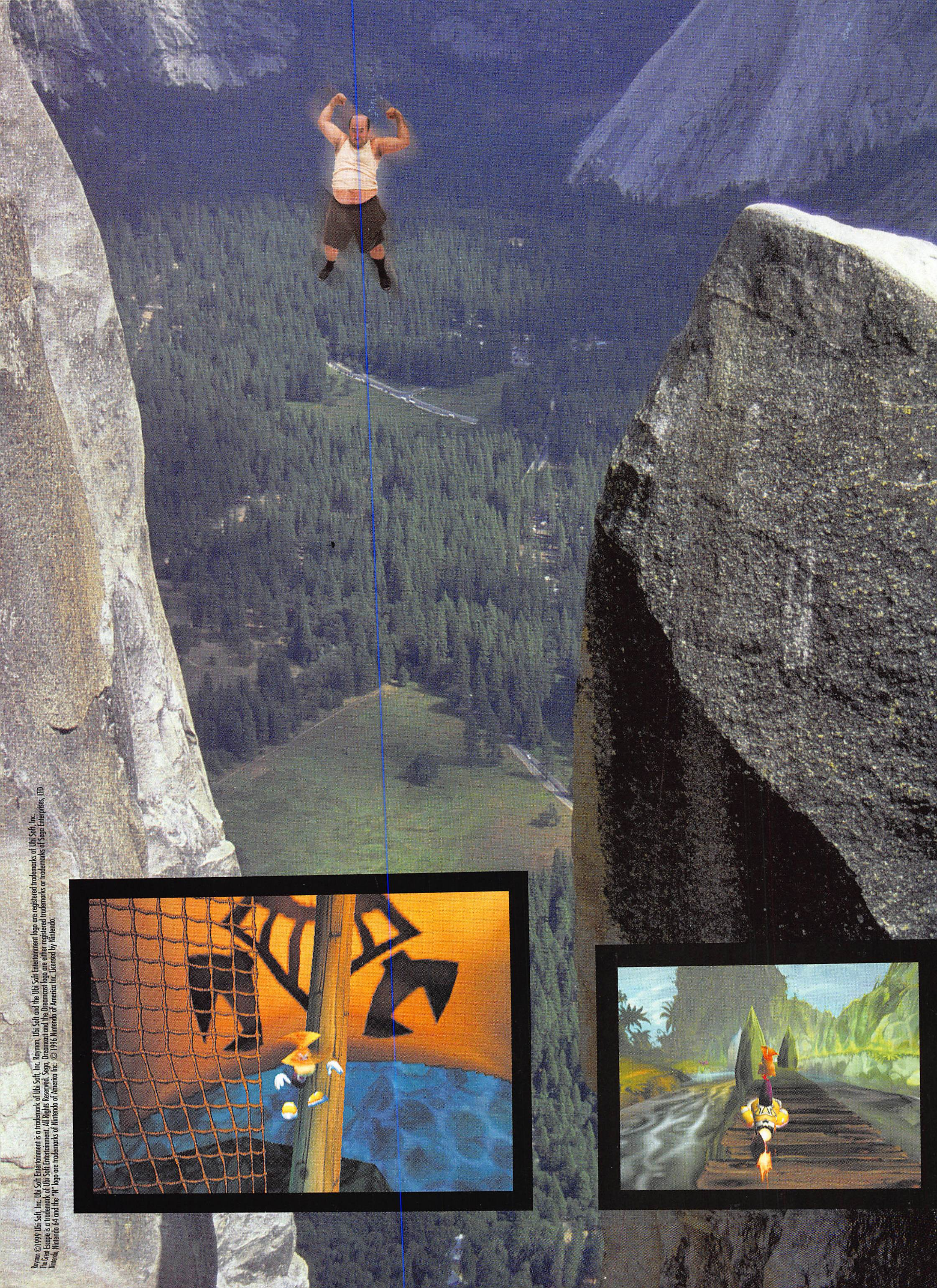


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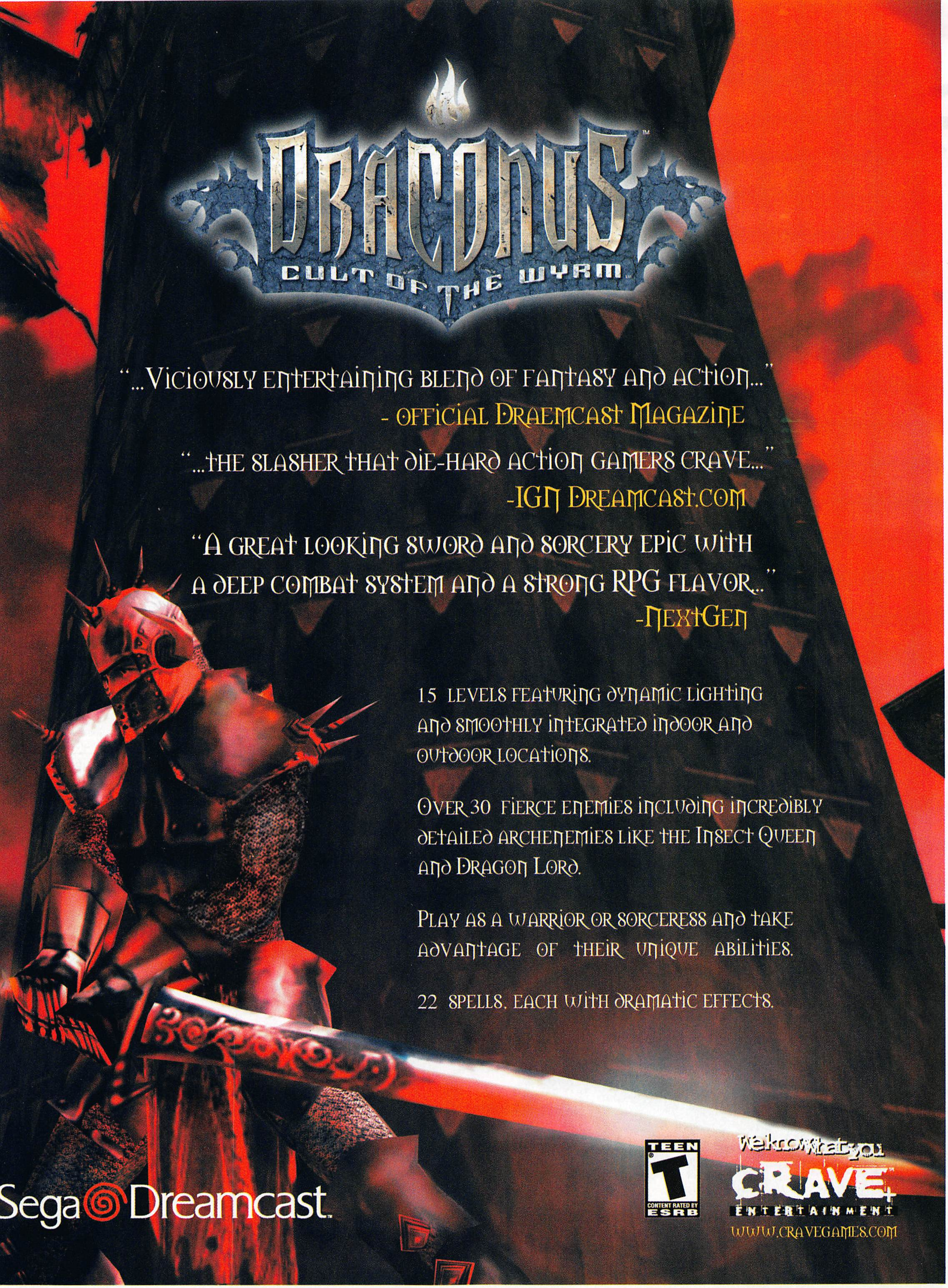
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In this edition of Ed Zone, I could prattle on at length about the impending release of the PlayStation 2 to an eager Japanese (and import) market, but I think I'll save that till next issue—no sense in making half-baked predictions without the facts, right? Instead, I think I'm going to say a little something about their potential uphill battle in the U.S. See, the odd thing is that if you even speculated that Sony had any chinks in its proverbial armor, you'd be laughed at, derided, and generally made the laughing stock for a good long time (outside of the sycophantic Internet Sega fanboy club, of course). But here I can make some solid predictions—at least somewhat solid, based on the evidence at hand...

Now, by this very moment, as you cradle this issue in your hands, Sega's sold-through a staggering two million units into American and Canadian households—in just a hair over six months. Let me repeat that: two million units sold into North American homes, not sitting on retailers' shelves gathering dust. Sega's momentum is still going strong, post-holidays. Now you can hand me the whole "Sega's just reaping the rewards of a broadened market that started when Sony debuted the PlayStation," which is fine—you're correct, at least in part. But is it that simple, as simple as a lot of pundits and industry 'experts' would have you believe?

Timing, as they say, is everything... and it's obviously one of the reasons Sony's keen on getting the PS2 out to the American public as briskly as possible, despite the fact that they're making mountains of cash. See, Sony realizes that the PlayStation hardware's old... 'geological old.' In a world where new graphic technologies materialize every six months, the PS is a dinosaur. Sony knows it, we know it, you know it. It's one of the key reasons the Dreamcast has sold so well. After all, given the option, what would you rather have—the newest, hottest thing since, well, the PlayStation, or a tired old horse ready to be shipped off the glue factory? Unfortunately, I'm a rather firm believer that Sony may have waited just a *little* long.

With history as our guide, let's take a brief look at what Sega managed to do to Nintendo with a sizeable head start. We all remember that, right? The Genesis launched two full years ahead of the Super Nintendo, and gave Sega at least a fighting chance—and they managed to capitalize big-time with the release of *Sonic the Hedgehog* in the summer of '91. Not only had Sega built up a sizeable user base prior to the SNES' release, but they also marketed the hell out of it, and its system became a household name in the process. Chalk up part of that success to Nintendo's own pig-headedness (something they once again failed to learn when taking on Sony—broken noses hurt, and hurt a *lot*) and failure to introduce the SNES at an earlier juncture. All of this just to milk a little more money out of the NES and, more importantly, revel in the half-baked notion that they were truly invincible. And, sure, Nintendo caught up (eventually), but at what price? They'll never dominate the market the way they once did, Pokémon or no. The thing is, Sony's in much the same position this time around. Hell, Sega made the same grave error Nintendo made with the Saturn—and we all know how that turned out...

As a second (and final) piece of evidence, let me put this forth: Sega enviably sold-through a huge number of units (nearly five million worldwide) six months prior to the PS2's U.S. debut, and economies of scale are bound to start kicking in anytime now (the lower-priced DC unit that debuted in Japan recently is a good example of this). Simply put: Sega had a nice price advantage before ($199.99 MSRP), and the smart bet's that Sega will be intelligent enough to be pro-active and drop the Dreamcast's price in the U.S. (several sharp blows to the head are bound to jar something loose). I'd also wager that they're not going to wait till the launch of the PS2 to do it (no "Well it's here, let's drop the price" shenanigans). What am I getting at? Well, it's quite simple, really: America's made up of Wal Mart and Best Buy customers, and no offense to them, but they're not likely to be your most savvy... To them, the difference in graphic quality between DC and PS2 will be a marginal one. And what's going to make their purchasing decision really simple? Price. We **all** know that the DC's going to be **a lot** cheaper than the PS2 (yeah, I could be wrong, but... nahhhh).

Sure, I could factor in Internet connectivity out of the box. Sega's finally getting around to debuting an online gaming network (free play, right Sega?) that they'll probably market to death, as well as a host of new games including *Sonic Adventure 2, NFL2001, NBA 2001*, and a suite of hot third-party titles (hope you third-party types realize that there is Dreamcast life beyond Christmas 2K) to round things out. But it's all going to come down to two things: price and momentum. Sega's going to have both well in hand... and then, of course, there's the 'Wild Card' (a.k.a. Nintendo). It all certainly makes for an interesting 4th Quarter, doesn't it?

So you tell me—is Sony in for an uphill battle? Does any of the above make any sense? Am I off my ass? Let me know. As always, I can be reached by email at **ecm@gamefan.com**, or good ol' snail mail (we still love those paper cuts), care of the Postmeister's address. While I'm donning my flame retardant gear (I'm sure there'll be a nice fat load of nasty mail in short order), be sure to check out what may be the best PS2 game heading down the pike: Oddworld Inhabitants' *Munch's Oddysee*. I'll be back next month when the topic will be bitter, belligerent game editors and the Internet users that hate them. Until then, I'm...

Editorial Director
Eric Mylonas

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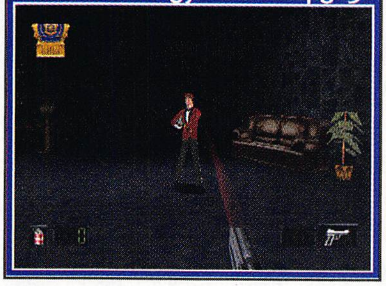
Volume 8, Issue 4 April 2000

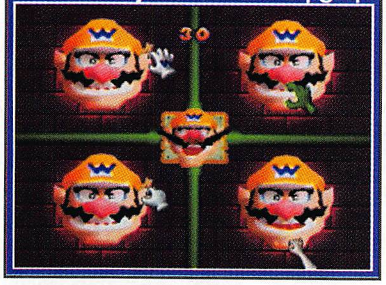
COVER STORY



COVER ART BY PATRICK "SPAZ" SPAZIENTE











GAME INDEX



ARK Came!

CARRIER

If You Can Hear It... You're Already Dead!



ARK Saw!

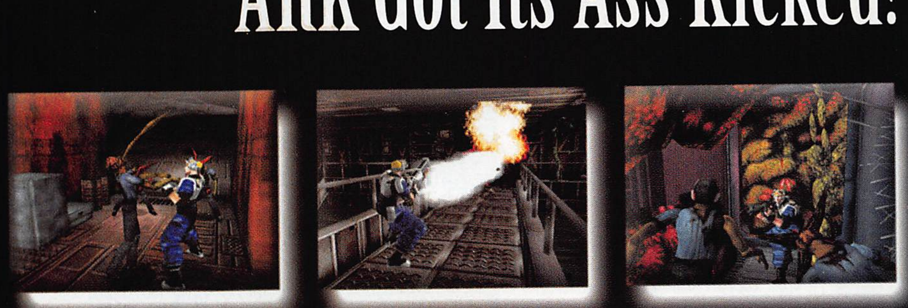
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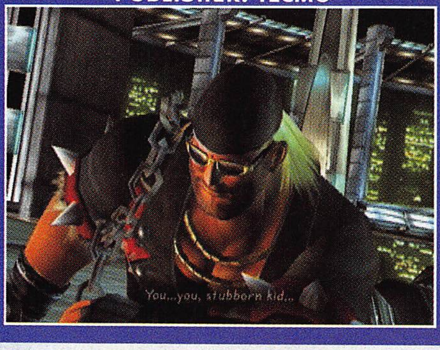
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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

April 2000

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

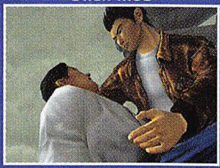
PUBLISHER: TECMO



READER'S TOP TEN

1) *Shen Mue* - DC
2) *Crazy Taxi* - DC
3) *Wrestlemania 2000* - N64
4) *Chu Chu Rocket* - DC
5) *Quake III* - PC
6) *Unreal Tournament* - PC
7) *SFIII:DI* - DC
8) *NBA Showtime* - DC
9) *Crash Team Racing* - PS
10) *Rayman 2* - N64

SHEN MUE



READER'S MOST WANTED

1) *DOA2* - DC
2) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC
3) *Tekken Tag Tourn.* - PS2
4) *Ridge Racer V* - PS2
5) *SNK vs. Capcom* - DC
6) *Gran Turismo 2000* - PS2
7) *Vagrant Story* - PS
8) *Ninja Gaiden* - PS2
9) *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2* - PS2
10) *Kiss* - DC

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN

*IMPORT TITLE



1) *Medievil 2* - PS
2) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC
3) *Dead or Alive 2* - DC
4) *Crazy Taxi* - DC
5) *SNK vs. Capcom* - NGPC
6) *Virtual On: OT** - DC
7) *Rocket* - N64
8) *Parodius Deluxe** - SS
9) *Xexex* - Arcade
10) *Spriggan** - Turbo Duo



1) *Dead or Alive 2* - DC
2) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC
3) *Crazy Taxi* - DC
4) *Syphon Filter 2* - PS
5) *Crash Team Racing* - PS
6) *Wipeout 3* - PS
7) *SF Zero 3** - DC
8) *Virtual On: OT** - DC
9) *Worms: Armageddon* - PC
10) *C&C: Tiberian Sun* - PC



1) *Unreal Tournament* - PC
2) *SF EX 2 Plus** - PS
3) *Armored Core: MoA* - PS
4) *Tekken Tag Tourn.* - PS2
5) *Tomba! 2* - PS
6) *Gran Turismo 2* - PS
7) *Dead or Alive 2* - DC
8) *Silent Bomber* - PS
9) *SF Alpha 3* - DC
10) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC



1) *Samba de Amigo* - Arcade
2) *Typing of the Dead* - Arcade
3) *Virtual On: OT** - DC
4) *Deception 3* - PS
5) *Mars TV* - Arcade
6) *Valkyrie Profile** - PS
7) *Dead or Alive 2* - DC
8) *Parasite Eve 2* - PS
9) *SF Alpha 2* - Arcade
10) *James Clavell's Shogun* - C64



1) *Dead or Alive 2* - DC
2) *Crazy Taxi* - DC
3) *Salamander 2* - Arcade
4) *Abe's Exoddus* - PS
5) *Carrier* - DC
6) *Virtual On: OT** - DC
7) *SFIII DI* - DC
8) *Silent Bomber* - PS
9) *Crash Team Racing* - PS
10) *Bangaio** - DC



1) *EverQuest* - PC
2) *Soldier of Fortune* - PC
3) *Syphon Filter 2* - PS
4) *Devil Dice 2** - PS
5) *Worms: Armageddon* - PC
6) *Hot Shots 2* - PS
7) *Medievil 2* - PS
8) *Colin McRae Rally* - PS
9) *NHL 2K* - DC
10) *Die Hard Trilogy 2* - PS

WIN

THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO ENTER THE DRAWING IS WRITE DOWN A LIST OF YOUR TOP 10 FAVORITE GAMES AND THE 10 GAMES YOU WANT THE MOST THAT AREN'T OUT YET, ON A PIECE OF PAPER OR A POSTCARD THEN SEND THEM TO: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 6301 DESOTO AVE., SUITE E, WOODLAND HILLS, CA 91367

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DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

THIS MONTH'S GUEST:
CHRIS ULM
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ODDWORLD INHABITANTS

1. *Civilization (series)* - PC, PS
2. *WarCraft II* - PC
3. *Spyro 2* - PS
4. *Asheron's Call* - PC
5. *Diablo* - PC
6. *Mario 64* - N64
7. *Wave Race* - N64
8. *Driver* - PS
9. *Reach For The Stars* - Apple II
10. *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee* - PS

CIVILIZATION II



PUBLISHER:
MICROPROSE (PC)
ACTIVISION (PS)

"*Civilization* and *Civilization II* are the finest turn-based strategy games ever developed and have the longest play life of any games that I've played. *WarCraft II* and *Spyro* set the mark for tuning, attention to detail and addictive gameplay. *Asheron's Call* is the best representative of online gaming I've yet played while *Diablo* took the tedium out of computer role-playing games for me. *Mario 64*, *Wave Race 64* and *Driver* have terrific controls and physics while *Reach For The Stars* has great "non-cheating" AI that I still enjoy playing. *Abe's Oddysee* is the most important game on this list because after playing a beta version of the game, I immediately joined the Oddworld team."


"Death is ultimately an act of grace
and love from the Lord.
A blessing is it not?"
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SNK

EDITOR ROUNDUP

Last month, you heard about our triumphs, returning from Christmas break all the merrier, with smiles and happy tales for everyone. But peace and tranquility does not a good story make. So in the interests of fair play, we dug around for a little dirt on our editors and now present you with... GameFan's Lowest Moments in Gaming!

ecm@gamefan.com



ECM

Sitting in the GameFan hotseat, under the watchful eyes of his peers and an Eidos PR rep, ECM played *Ninja*. Watching helplessly as his purple ninja slipped off a log and fell to a watery death, ECM claimed it was poor control... and thus, Weak Sauce was born.

ghiggins@gamefan.com



THE JUDGE

After stomping the staff of *Video Games* magazine at *Tekken*, The Judge thought he was pretty good. But one day, he met his match. In a nearby, unsuspecting arcade, he was demolished by none other than... Todd Bridges! "Whatchoo talkin' about Willis?" Oh, the humanity!

eggo@gamefan.com



EGGO

While Eggo has had his share of weak sauce moments (e.g., losing to Fury), the worst has got to be Midway's *NBA Showtime* tournament for DC. The person who handed him his first loss? The Prince of Gaming Music Tommy Tallarico!

fury@gamefan.com



FURY

Fury was so excited after beating *Super Ghouls 'N Ghosts* on the SNES that he ran out of the room to get a camera to record this precious moment. When he returned, he was just in time to see a naked Arthur die to a level 1 zombie. Bracelet? What bracelet?

cerberus@gamefan.com



CERBERUS

Cerberus will forever rue the day he picked up the controller and challenged Fury to a game of *CTR*. Bragging about his skills in Thug Tactics, Garden Grove-style driving, the match was made more interesting by a friendly wager... which Cerberus lost... badly.



THE 6th MAN

The 6th Man's career is full of gaming low points: pronouncing games wrong like Tuhroke 2 or Duke New-kem. Playing *Street Fighter: The Movie* in plain view where everybody else could see (and having fun no less!). The list goes on and on...

THE ART DEPARTMENT

reubus@gamefan.com



REUBUS

Warning! This will sicken RPG fans. Reubus recently disclosed—during a temporary lapse of lucidity—that the only RPG which he has played all the way through is... <cover your eyes, children> *Beyond the Beyond*!

waka@gamefan.com



WAKA

This one shouldn't surprise long-time readers. Rock-bottom for Waka's gaming career was the first time he played *EverQuest*. And with PS2 coming out... he'll have even more virtual friends.

tao@gamefan.com



TAO

Tao's career low was the day he got schooled in the art of Quake II fragging by rookie Kodomo, who'd just learned how to fight while walking backwards. Backpedalling like a chicken, Kodomo owned Tao by the final count of 20-6.

PRODUCTIVITY KILLER OF THE MONTH



Shooter Alley

Height: 4.82 ft.
Weight: 250 lb.
Blood Type: A+
Special Abilities: Draw Crowds, Smart Bomb

Back in Volume 7 Issue 8, the Chicken of the Month was ECM's Marvel vs. Capcom mini arcade cabinet. Ever since then, he has gone on a mad shooter shopping spree, the likes of which we pray eBay never sees again... <shiv-er>

The end result? That cabinet has been host to a wealth of classic 2D shooters. And with each new shooter that resides in that cabinet, every member of the staff feels compelled to prove his worth by getting further than the last guy. If you're into shmups (i.e., shoot 'em ups) like ECM is, this is the machine of your dreams.

Recently, venerable shooters such as *Parodius, Salamander 2, Macross, Macross Plus, Blazing Star, Pulstar, Xexex*, and *Strikers 1945 Plus* have all spent time reliving the glory days in Shooter Alley.

With each paycheck, the library of decrepit titles grows, and there's no end in sight. ECM has plans to collect every shooter ever made, unless someone can stop him and put an end to his megalomaniacal ways! Where's that girlfriend when you need her? He must be stopped, before he turns GameFan into a Mecca for shooter sausages!

This month in GameFan's BOX-O-FUN!



Fury's Wall

On the off chance things ever turn sour at GameFan, Fury has been keeping his options open, in terms of potential employment. Here—for the first time ever—we proudly present a small portfolio of his handdrawn sketches. Though we are sure the response will be unanimous to have this become a monthly feature, our artist extraordinaire works at his own pace. You can't rush greatness. This month in Fury's Wall, we've got drawings of Eggo, Squall, and Fury's "alternate" version of Abe for this month's cover. Man, the voting was close, but Patrick "Spaz" Spaziente's slightly more colorful take on Abe and Munch won out by a narrow margin. Whew...





CHICKEN OF THE MONTH

The Piggy Bank



Here's the power of marketing at work for ya: "Save your pennies" cuz *Tomba 2* is coming! Tokuro Fujiwara, producer of *Ghost 'N Goblins* and *Tomba*, has an obsession with pigs, so it's only fitting that *Tomba 2's* marketing campaign should reflect that theme as well.

With the goal of being GameFan's Chicken of the Month in mind, the fine folks at Sony thought long and hard designing their latest chicken. The end result? This very cool and highly sought after *Tomba 2* piggy bank!

This pint-sized piggy is cute, convenient, and if you ever get pissed off, you can take a sledgehammer to it to get your money out (or you can just open it from the bottom... although the sledgehammer is much more colorful).

Game companies, if you'd like to be our Chicken of the Month, be sure to send us lots of cool, free stuff and your product could be spotlighted here in a future issue for all the sausages to drool over!

SAUSAGE OF THE MONTH



A few months back, we had a female SotM who was both a hard-core gamer and an aspiring video game artist. So how do you top something like that? Introducing GameFan's first ever <drumroll please>... Dual Sausage(s) of the Month!

Meet Kelly (left) and Annie, devout readers of our magazine for the past four years. They're hard-core gamers and Kelly's also an artist, as evinced by this picture of Utena which she drew on Annie's leg And guess what? There's two of them! (Girls, not legs...) For more of Kelly's artwork, check out Postmeister at the back of this issue.

What did Kelly and Annie do to get published in GameFan? Kelly just sent her hard-core story and picture to Posty's mailing address (We swear, flashing a little leg had nothing to do with her selection! Honest!). Have you got what it takes to be our Sausage of the Month?







VIEWPOINT











G — Graphic
C — Contr
P — Play Mechanic
M — Musi
O — Originalit



Deception 3
PlayStation
Tecmo
Action Puzzle
Reviewed page 30

Yes, originality is good. However, this just isn't my cup of tea. It moves way too slowly and the whole idea of being 'bad' doesn't really appeal to me (I always pick the 'white knight' character in video games—I enjoy the irony). If I could do something like this in real life, well, sign me up (hey Fury, I need your help with something... <pause> ...cue screaming), but this isn't my idea of a good time. Kudos for originality (2 chapters ago) but I'll be playing *Silent Bomber* instead.

G 6 C 6 P 5 M 6 O 8 — **73**

Deception 3 (and the entire series for that matter) is a niche title if I've ever seen one. It's clever, completely unique, innovative in design and that spells trouble for most of today's *Tomb Raider* and *Crash Bandicoot* lovin' crowd. True, this is NOT a game that little Timmy's gonna have sweet dreams over, but for older gamers (especially those with a deep rooted sadistic side) looking for an original /complex title, *D3* is where its at!

G 7 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 9 — **87**

I played *Kagero* for only a short time. And I must say, I think I'm hooked. Between *Deception 3*'s puzzles and sadistic theme there's enough to keep anyone that gets a kick out of the Spanish Inquistion busy. Not exactly what I could call a revol tionary sequel, but it's more of the same just better and longer. Sick of playing noth ing but RPGs, fighting and racing games o the PlayStation? *D3* will be your way out and what a way to go.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 7 — **89**



Diehard Trilogy 2
PlayStation
Fox
Action
Reviewed page 36

Not one for the first *Die Hard Trilogy*, I approaced the second with much hesitation... and wasn't surprised to find that this one didn't really rock my world either. Sure, it's a great series of movies and the 3 engine gameplay is more varied and integrated this time around, but I'm just not into any single one of its modes. I think this one might just fall into the 'milking it' category... and we all know how I hate strawberry milk...

G 5 C 6 P 4 M 5 O 5 — **70**

I love *Diehard* as a movie, but not as a game. The three game engine doesn't really work, since none of them is much fun to play or pretty to look at. In fact, the jerky movements of the camera had my head spinning. With *Syphon Filter 2* available this month also, it's best to overlook the tempting *Diehard* license and go with Gabriel Logan if you want a fix of gunslingin' action. Everything's better in *SF2*: graphics, gameplay, control.

G 5 C 6 P 6 M 7 O 7 — **66**

John is back for another adventure on the PlayStation. It's going to be tough for Little Timmy to find enough loose change to pick this one up after spending his hard earned paper route money on *Syphon Filter 2*. *Diehard* suffers the same fate a *Carrier*, there's not much to complain abou but by the same token it's pretty difficult t find something to get excited about. Th one falls into that "If you've gotta have everything" category.

G 6 C 7 P 7 M 8 O 6 — **79**



Silent Bomber
PlayStation
Bandai
Action
Reviewed page 32

God save me: I agree with Cerberus on a Viewpoint (what's next? A fond farewell to bowel control?). Well at least this sad day is salvaged with a great game. While I began to wonder if Bandai had any semblance of a clue in regards to making a good (nevermind great) game (shudder with me as memories of *Macross*, *Gundam* and *DBZ* games return to fetid life). Good graphics, slick gameplay, and enough explosions to earn this one a solid GameFan 'sleeper hit' combo.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 9 — **90**

Silent Bomber is one of the easiest pick-up-and-play games I've seen in a long time. It's reminds me of when Dango played *Metal Gear Solid* nonstop and got so bored he began blowing up bosses with C4. The graphics are decent, the gameplay's not bad, the futuristic theme's pretty cool, and there's plenty of explosions (if you're into that). But *SB* is somewhat mindless, and I prefer my games to have more depth.

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 9 — **80**

Now this is an action game, if I ever saw one. Brings me back to the 'old' days of *Contra* and *Super C*. Nothing beats a mindless blastathon, but *Silent Bomber* is more than that, oh so much more. Besides a character that can move bette than most of the cast of Cirque du Sole there's four different bombs and the E-un system. The most fun I've had in the actio department, at least on PlayStation, in a very long time.

G 9 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 8 — **91**



Street Fighter EX2+
PlayStation
Capcom
Fighting
Reviewed page 33

The bastard child of the Street Fighter franchise, I for one can do without the whole Arika-spawned franchise (but hey, they make a mean game of Tetris). The graphics look solid, and the gameplay is (mostly) SF-based, but the simple fact is that this series should have remained strictly 2D as the 3D graphics don't add (and only detract, really) from the game- this is strictly average stuff. Now it's time to not get excited about PS2 SF EX3...<yawn>.

G 7 C 7 P 5 M 5 O 5 — **75**

I still remember the days of *Street Fighter EX* like they were only yesterday. The reason I couldn't stop playing that game was because of the Expert Mode missions. The Expert Mode in *EX2+* will challenge even veteran *Street Fighter* players who've been there since Day 1 when the game had only eight playable characters. As for the new characters and 3D graphics... eh, I'd rather play *SF3:Third Strike* if I want a Vs. mode *Street Fighter*.

G 6 C 7 P 8 M 6 O 7 — **81**

Though I was impressed with the original *SF EX*, the sequel sadly just doesn't seem to captivate me. Perhaps *EX3*'s upcoming arrival on the PS2 has robbed me of much of the spendor and excitement from Capcom/Arika's newest 3D brawl fest? O maybe, with the GODLY import version o *SF3 WI* already out, it was simply a matter o too little, too late. While its always nice t see Blanka make an appearance , I still prefer his antics in *Alpha 3*.

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 5 — **82**



Syphon Filter 2
PlayStation
989 Studios
Action Adventure
Reviewed page 37

Well, we knew that Cerberus and I agreeing was short lived (bowel control restored, Houston!)—*Syphon Filter 2* rocks! After all, who likes long levels, solid gameplay, and enough head shots to make even 007 vets blush—not me, no sir. Anyway, this is the best game that 989 Studios (or Eidetic... creators of *Bubsy 3D* believe it... or not) have ever done. Now I lay and dream of a day when *Tobu* will be allowed out of development limbo...<sob>.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 8 — **94**

Gabriel Logan makes a successful return, and this time he has no Snake Solid to compete with, unless you consider *VR Missions* a 'new' game. As far as secret agent action goes, this is one of the best out there, proving once again that the PS is the console to have if you crave that kinda thing. Great gameplay, sound, and plenty of action. The only thing I wish they'd changed was the graphics. Hopefully *SF3* will have a new engine or be on PS2.

G 8 C 7 P 9 M 8 O 8 — **88**

Do I like *Syphon Filter 2*? Yes. Do I want to play through each and every mission? No. While the first game turned the action adventure upside down with all the neat stuff Gabriel had in his magic bag the second time around is nothing more than a mis sion-pack of sorts. There's not really muc like *SF2* in the PlayStation library, but I'd rather wait and see how the last chapter or PS2 turns out. Can I have my *Metal Gear: VR Missions* back, please?

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 7 — **83**

arty, party, party! When playing against the 'computer' *Mario Party* has always been a boring game. Grab three friends and this is a riot. Nothing beats pissing off your friends with thug tactics. We went at it for a couple of hours and, if any game can do it, this is the game that'll make you wanna kill your friends. More mini-games and boards increase the longevity of this one. If you've got some friends that will play this is a must.

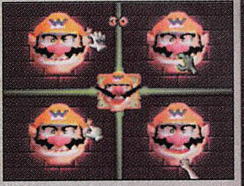
G 8 C 8 P 9 M 5 O 6 **89**

If you have a large supply of friends and controllers (cuz you will be going through a couple with *MP2*), then this is the game for you. Provided you like that sugar-coated, Nintendo charm. At least there's no Pikachu in this game. The supply of mini-games seems nearly endless. The graphics are good, the gameplay is varied, and the music is unmistakably classic Nintendo. What more do you want? I choose you, *MP2*!

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 8 **87**

Loved the first one for being new and something different (hadn't seen anything like this sinc NES) but the new one tends to take that old adage "more equals better" a little too much to heart. While I like the fact that there's a whole new pile of mini-games to play (hey, no more break your analog stick 'rowing' adventures!), earning stars this time around became an excercise in tedium (I like a challenge, but c'mon). Now, about a *Smash Bros.* sequel...

G 8 C 7 P 5 M 6 O 7 **77**



Mario Party 2
Nintendo 64
Nintendo
Board game
Reviewed page 42

certainly do appreciate Nintendo's tremendous success with these little monsters, but I still wish they'd forever remain on the Gameboy—I can only stand so many fruity N64 carts and this one is sadly Citrus King. Yeah, the converter that allows for Gameboy info to translate onto the *Pokemon Stadium* cart is cool, but not enough to make me spend more than five minutes with this one. The bottom line: I hate Pokemon!

G 7 C 4 P 5 M 5 O 6 **70**

It really upsets me when people claim this to be a better game than *Monster Rancher*. The sound, gameplay, and depth are much better in *MR* on the PS (there's no one out there who owns an N64 but **not** a PS, right?). Of course, this game boasts the mouth-watering Game Boy transfer ability (from the zillion color games everyone's bought) and the system-selling Pikachu... "I choose YOU!" I can smell a million seller here... <sigh>

G 8 C 6 P 6 M 7 O 7 **69**

Though it's not a completely fair comparison, Tecmo's *Monster Rancher* series trounces Nintendo's bread winner by a mile (can you believe these guys are A LOT more popular than *Mario* and *Zelda*... <shudder>). While the fighting is kinda' cool, and it all looks real pretty, I can't help but get the feeling that only Poke-maniacs will like this one (I hear there's two or three of them running around). Now about a *Metroid* sequel... please?

G 8 C 6 P 6 M 6 O 7 **74**



Pokemon Stadium
Nintendo 64
Nintendo
Fighting/Breeding
Reviewed page 44

How do I sum this one up? Does middle-of-the-road sum it up enough for ya? Carrier neither excels nor sucks at any particular aspect. I really can't shake the comparison to Deep Fear on the Saturn. It's like THE SAME GAME—except this time around it's a huge aircraft carrier instead of a tiny sub. Fortunately, there aren't too many games in this genre on the DC. If you want real Survival Horror, Shinji Mikami-style, wait for RE: Code Veronica.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 6 **80**

Here's a *Resident Evil*-like game that 'borrows' from movies like *Aliens* and *The Thing* and the father... *RE*, but *Carrier* does it well. It's the total package: decent voice acting, an interesting story (that's better than *RE*), tweaked control/gameplay, and crisp graphics. Jaleco definitely surprised me with this one. The only problem I have with *Carrier* is the inexplicable slowdown on ocassion. But it's still worth checking out.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 4 **86**

Blue Stinger: liked it. *Code Veronica*: loved it (putting it mildly). *Carrier*: um, well, yeah, I like it. While it's no *RE:CV* (what is?) it's a good game in its own right. While there are some nasty moments of slow-down and questionable dialogue and voice acting (wondered where the *RE1* and *2* actors had gotten to... now we know), it's a solid game cut in the Survival Horror mold. Seems Jaleco has something nice to tide you over till *Veronica* arrives.

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 7 **84**



Carrier
Dreamcast
Jaleco
Survival Horror
Reviewed page 56

I'm not going to defend how cheesy *DOA2* can be at times (it's way too easy to counter), but I am going to remind you of how fun to play it is. I was a big fan of the first and I'm happy to say, not just visually, *DOA2* is lights years ahead of its prequel. Awesome character design goes a long way and toss in *DOA2*'s cool tag team mode and you've got *Tekken Tag Tournament* for the DC, more or less. Forget *Soul Calibur*, this is where it's at!

G 10 C 8 P 9 M 9 O 7 **93**

I'm not completely sold on *DoA2*. It's like *Virtua Fighter* without the daunting learning curve. Scrubs can instantly pick up the controller and be lethal, provided they know how to throw and reverse. Speaking of reversals, they deal way too much damage. Character models and backgrounds are eye-popping, but I'd still rather play *Soul Calibur* because it has graphics, gameplay, **and** depth (and an 8-way run that's a lot easier to perform).

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 8 **89**

DOA2 is THE best looking home console game ever! Each time I sit down and play, I'm absolutely amazed... animation, texture quality, character and level design... UNBELIEVABLE!! And I thought *Soul Calibur* was impressive—bahh. As much as I'd love to see Team Ninja come out with a game more often than once every two and a half years, the payoff is beyond compare! Get ready to pick your jaw off the floor—tasty.

G 10 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 8 **95**



Dead or Alive 2
Dreamcast
Tecmo
Fighting
Reviewed page 52

I know games are supposed to get better with each sequel, but this is *crazy*. Capcom didn't even develop *RE:CV* and it trounces *RE*, *RE2* and *RE3* in one fell swoop. Maybe it's that there's finally a console with enough polygon pushing power to make the hairs on the backs of our necks to stand up. If you want to know what I think read ECM's review, I agree with about 99.9% of the stuff he talked about. *RE:CV* is an *RE* fan's wet dream.

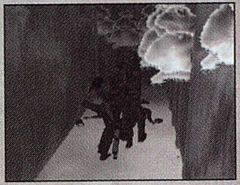
G 9 C 6 P 7 M 9 O 6 **94**

Maybe it's the double gun-toting blastin'. Maybe it's the thrill of gunnin' down my classmates, I mean... zombies! Maybe I'm just smitten with the *Resident Evil* series. The more you play this game, the more it'll grow on you and get better, despite the iffy voice acting. I still enjoy the series after this latest outing, but I'm beginning to wonder how many more *Res Evil*'s I can take before puking up toxic green zombie fluids.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 6 **92**

Like any *Resident Evil* fan, I'm taken by *Code Veronica*. It's a great looking game with tons of heart stopping moments but alas, it's simply another *RE* game. Sure it's definitely the best of the bunch and the intro (John Woo would be proud!) is insane, but I'd rather waste away my nights (and days if ECM would let me) playing Jaleco's *Carrier*—I'm smitten with the electric scope mechanism! Now if only *Dino Crisis* could recieve a DC facelift...

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 6 **90**



Resident Evil: CV
Dreamcast
Capcom
Survival Horror
Reviewed page 48

This is a disappointment. After all the hype about *Soul Reaver* looking *that much better* on the Dreamcast I can't play this. *Soul Reaver* on the DC is nothing more than a slightly improved PC port. Sure, there's nice filtering here, cleaner textures over there, but underneath it all it's still *Kain*, and I've already been here. I guess if you haven't made time to play *Soul Reaver* this would be the version to do it on. Just be warned it's a paper tiger.

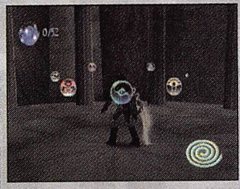
G 7 C 8 P 7 M 9 O 6 **80**

If you remember, I didn't like *Soul Reaver* on PS much, being a **huge** fan of *Blood Omen*. This port has some cosmetic improvements over the PS version: higher frame-rate, higher resolution, and improved textures. But the gameplay is still a bit slow for my taste. Too much box-pulling and running from point A to point B. The only real competition this game has on DC is *Shadowman*, but I'd rather play that than this.

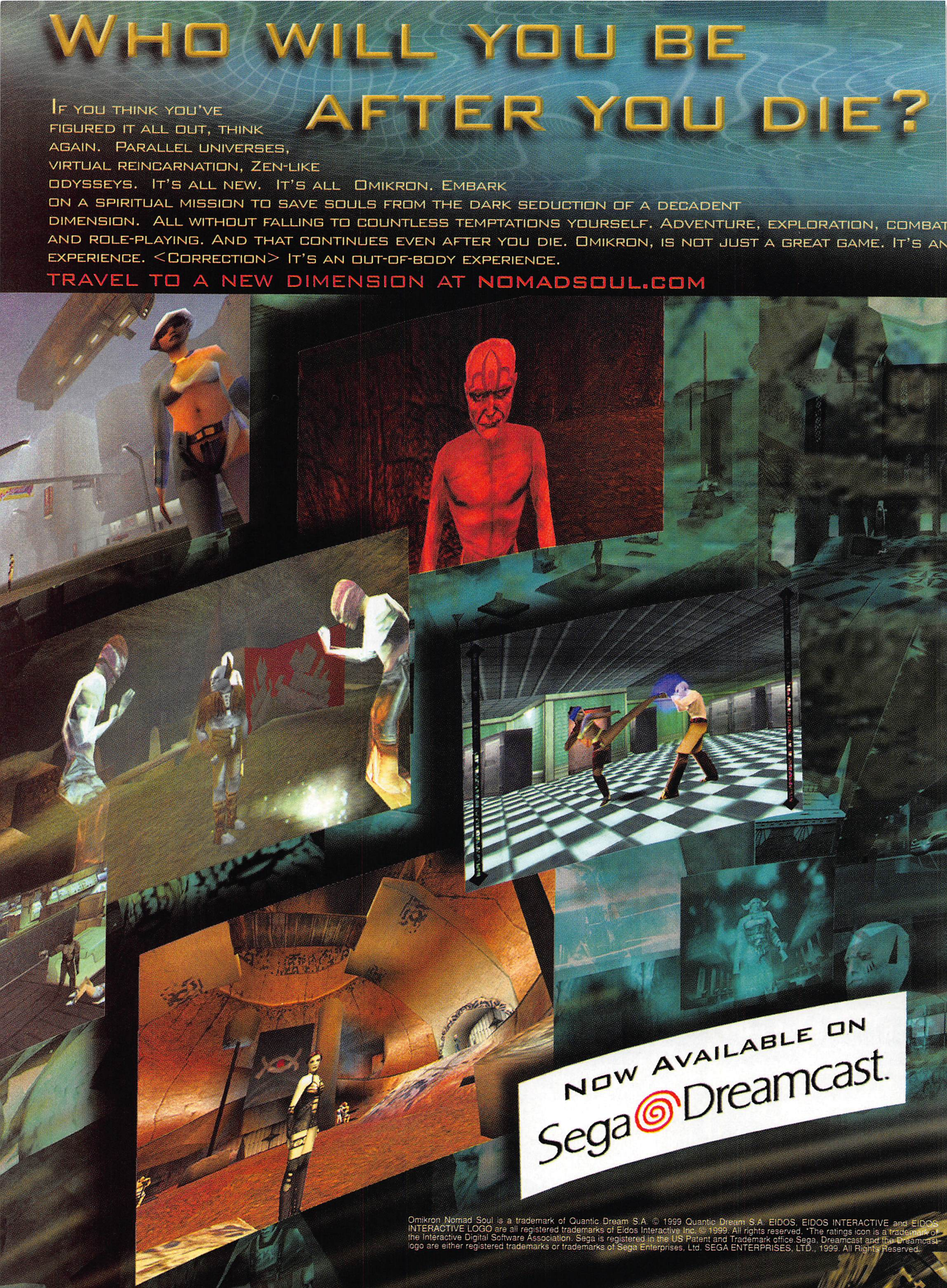
G 7 C 7 P 5 M 7 O 7 **78**

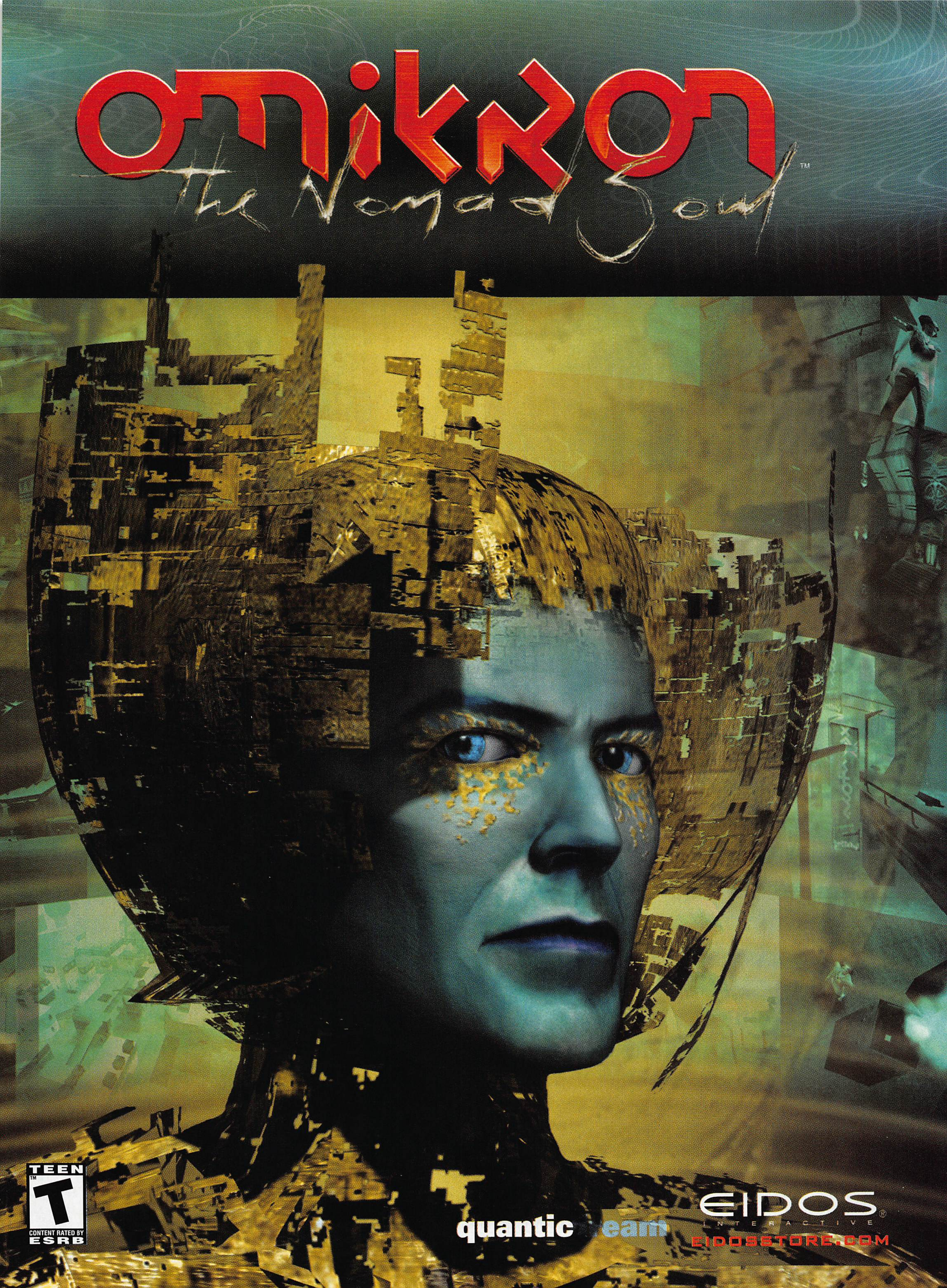
This, folks, is what happens when you take a **marginal** game, do a **marginal** port, and release it to a public gasping for new DC releases. Much of the promised upgrades simply fail to materialize (volumetric fog, massive jump in poly counts, etc.) but that's not really the problem. The problem is that this game wasn't very good to start with and the DC rev really brings nothing new to the table (strawberry milk isn't good for you). Bring me *Legacy of Kain II*... then we can talk.

G 7 C 6 P 6 M 7 O 6 **68**



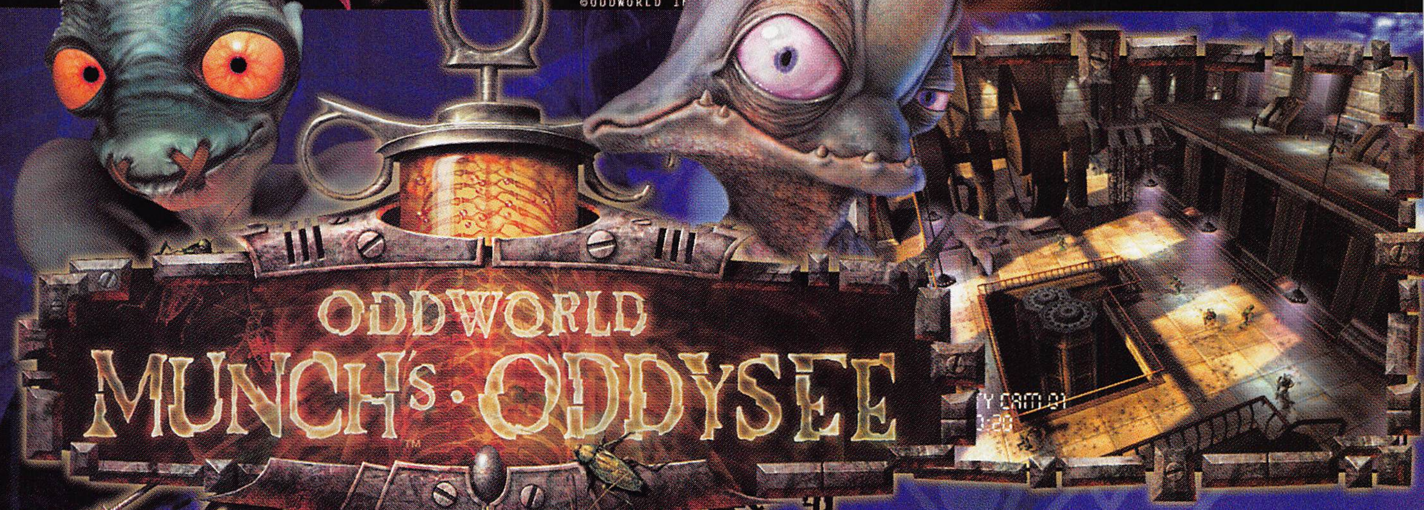
Soul Reaver
Dreamcast
Eidos
Action Adventure


WHO WILL YOU BE AFTER YOU DIE?
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ODDWORLD MUNCH's ODDYSEE



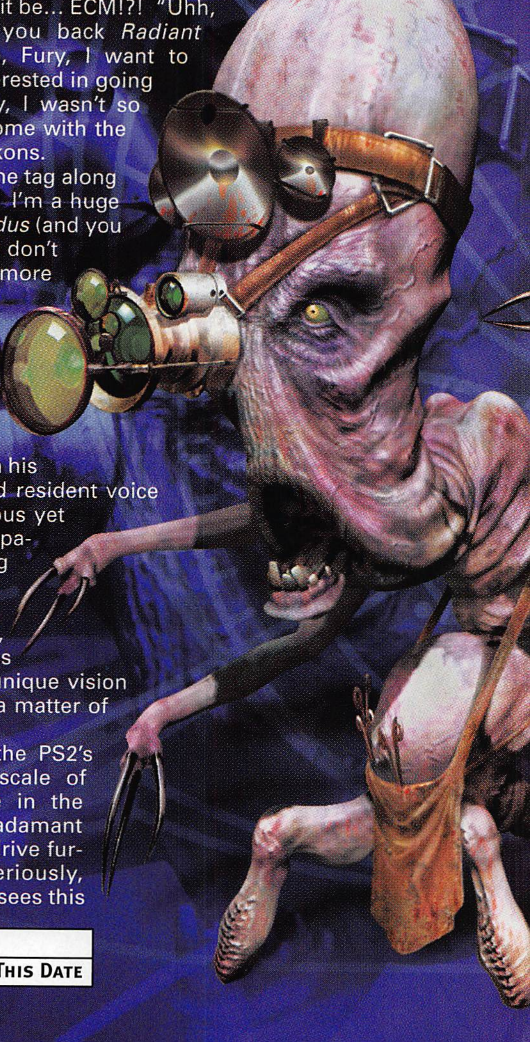


It was 11:58 Tuesday night, and as usual, this editor was completely exhausted; I was, in fact, drifting away into a state of near-hibernation (which is rare, and usually quite welcome to an insomniac) when the phone rang. Late-night calls don't often spell good news, so I quite willingly stayed put... After a few more attempts, the caller quit. Finally, my roommate pounded on my door... "PHONE!" <sigh> I really need to move. Who could it be... ECM!?! "Uhh, I swear I gave you back *Radiant Silvergun*." "No, Fury, I want to know if you're interested in going to Oddworld tomorrow." Suddenly, I wasn't so tired anymore... in fact, I was overcome with the strength of a thousand joyous Mudokons.

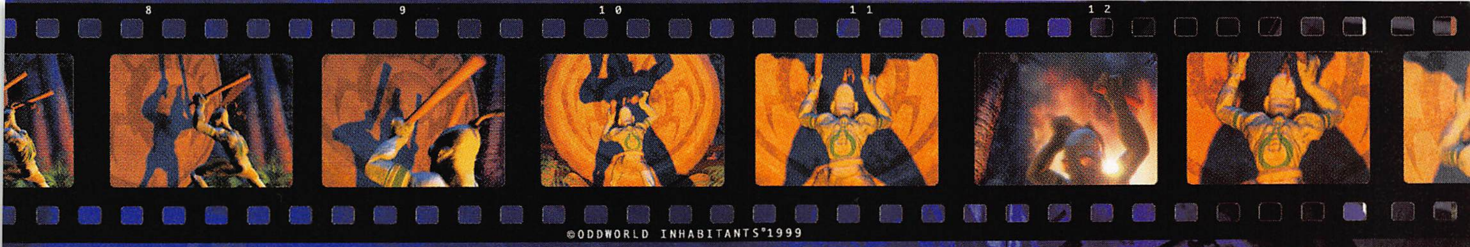
For weeks, I'd begged ECM to let me tag along on one of his famed Oddworld visits. I'm a huge fan of *Abe's Oddysee* and *Abe's Exoddus* (and you should be, too... shame on those who don't own the pair), and I saw this trip as more than a mere opportunity to get away from the insanity of GameFan. Finally, I'd get a chance to go one on one with the creative forces behind Oddworld—a land ten times the size of Earth, and perhaps the most fantastic virtual world ever crafted!

Like a mad scientist locked away in his Laboratory, Oddworld's president and resident voice actor (who tends to break into hilarious yet frightening renditions of Abe and company—"Hello... hello") Lorne Lanning has devised a literal universe not unlike that of Lucas' "Star Wars." His vision is astonishing enough in scope, but possibly the most disturbing is Oddworld's ability to transform this unique vision into a game. Apparently, it was just a matter of finding the right hardware...

Lorne's quick to point out that the PS2's barely able to convey the entire scale of *Munch's Oddysee* (the second title in the *Oddworld* quintology), but he's also adamant that greater specs will be needed to drive further installments—1028 bits!? Seriously, though—believe it or not—Oddworld sees this



FEATURE	FURY: THE ODD'S BACK, AND STRANGER THAN EVER!	DEVELOPER - ODDWORLD INHABITANTS	1 PLAYER
		PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	AVAILABLE THIS DATE



bit-count as the next leap in home console performance. Until then, the company has a series of "side stories" in mind (much like *Abe's Exoddus*, which was not a TRUE addition to the quintology). These include *AE, Hand oF Odd, Munch's Exoddus, Slig Storm,* and several others which have been developed to provide excellent Odd diversions until more sophisticated platforms surface... can you say "PS3?"

Long before development began on *Munch's*, or even *Abe's Oddysee,* for that matter, Oddworld set out to create the foundation for their universe. "It's not like we were going to do one game and hope for the opportunity to do a sequel... we had a ten-year plan," says Lanning. And it's this way of thinking that's allowed the folks at Oddworld to get a head start in preparing *Munch's* expansive game engine and gorgeous artwork. In fact, when I arrived at the offices of Oddworld Inhabitants, I discovered that PS2 dev. kits had been delivered only days earlier... and yes, the PS2 TOOL development station DOES look as strange in person as it does in pictures.

Now imagine with me, if you will, a game where things like life meters and menu screens don't exist, a title that completely revolves around true-to-life organic principles... that's the general concept behind *Munch's Oddysee.* Say (as Lorne explained) you have a bunch of Mudokons working in a factory; what if *Munch* shuts off the vending machine? The workers are going to get thirsty, and eventually go through withdrawal. This, of course, will ultimately affect their work performance, and let me tell you... the Mudokons aren't a race you want to deprive of caffeine! O.K., now take that basic idea and multiply it by a hundred, because this *Oddysee*'s going to incorporate something completely unheard of in game design—humanity!

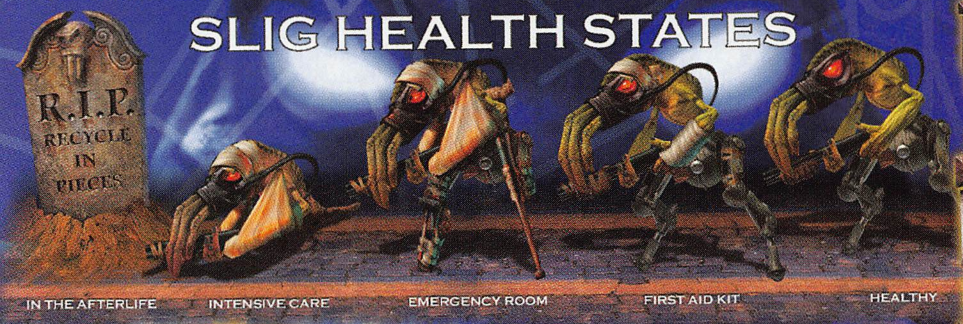
It's not often that GameFan decides to champion a title that's not an instant classic... and eventually, a bestseller (uhh, discounting the *BC Racers* incident... thanks, E. Storm!). Like Neverhood's *Skullmonkeys,* the Oddworld games DESERVE respect that the majority of U.S. publications weren't willing to give them.







SLIG HEALTH STATES

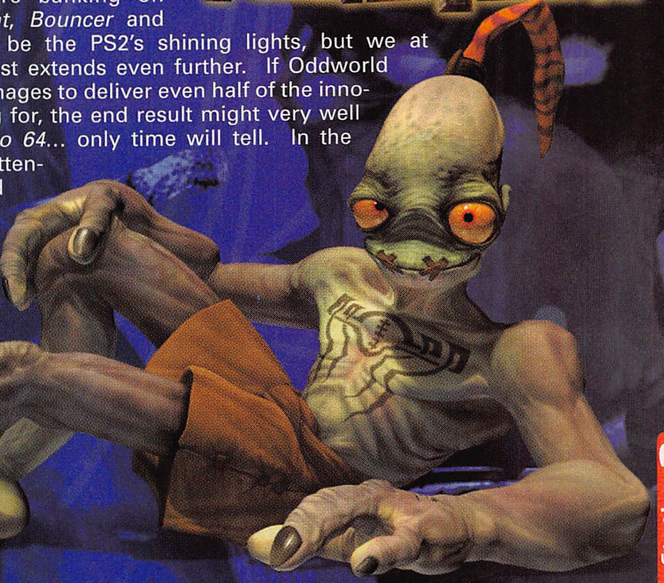




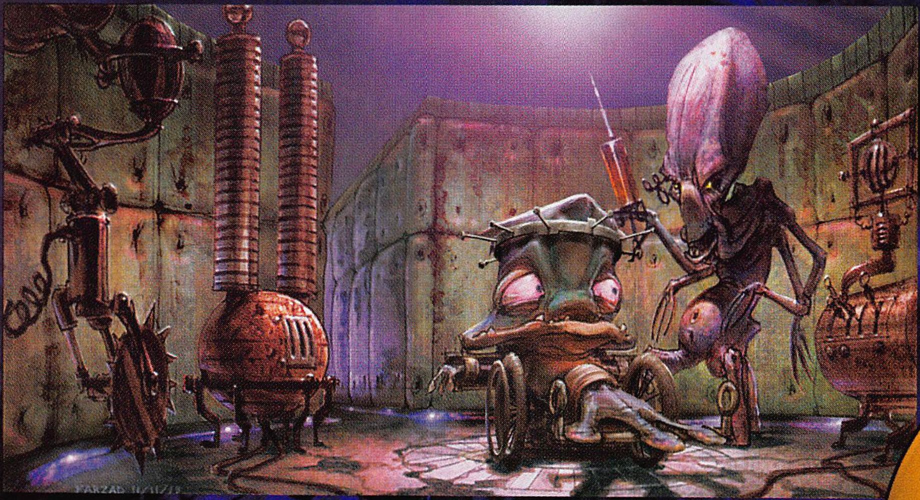


Go back a few years in the GF archives (Vol. 5, Iss. 9), and you'll see we gave the original, *Abe's Oddysee,* a glowing review and scores of 95, 94, and 91. Sure, most gamers are banking on *Tekken Tag Tournament, Bouncer* and *Gran Turismo 2000* to be the PS2's shining lights, but we at GameFan believe this list extends even further. If Oddworld stays on course and manages to deliver even half of the innovations they're shooting for, the end result might very well be the PS2's own *Mario 64*... only time will tell. In the meantime, direct your attention to the Oddworld interview on the following pages, and decide for yourself—*Munch's Oddysee*: a feat of modern game design, or too ambitious for its own good?

Fury



Lorne Lanning of Oddworld Inhabitants



GameFan recently had the opportunity to sit down with Lorne Lanning, Oddworld's creative force. And if you thought their games were odd...

GameFan: How did you come up with the concept of gamespeak?
Lorne Lanning: Well, what do we love about characters? One, they're self-aware. Any characters that aren't self-aware in classic entertainment just don't do anything for us—they have to have the appearance that they see and that they hear. They also have to talk, otherwise, there's really no attraction to them. Forget their story and their medium—you're not just going to become attracted to them on a deeper emotional, dynamic level if we don't give the characters some degree of vocabulary—listening, hearing, and the ability to respond... That's how we came up with the notion of gamespeak. You know, basic speech and communication, getting other characters to follow you around, etc. That is to say, well, where I used to throw a punch, I should now be able to throw a word, and that word should be able to trigger a response that seems lifelike ("Hello," "Hello?," "Follow me," "O.k.").



GF: So was the PlayStation spec the minimum you needed, or has it surpassed the minimum spec?
LL: I'll tell you exactly what happened: We started designing *Munch's Odyssey* a long time ago, and weren't far into it when we figured out it wouldn't even run in real-time 3D on the PlayStation. With all those links of animation, making sure those feet were locked to the floor, making sure they bounced back with the right sensibilities, we said to ourselves, "There's just no way *Munch* and its story is going to run on a PSX." So we came up with the ideal spec, and we started designing it, but it just wasn't the game we wanted, it was too constrained. We were kind of setting the spec really where the Dreamcast wound up being... We had to ask ourselves, "Is Sony going to come out with something that meets this spectrum, or are they going to blow it away—and by the time they announce what it's going be, what are Nintendo, etc., going to do? We finally decided we'd place the bet that there would be enough pressure from the PC world to force the next generation of console systems to be a winner, with very impressive specs. So we went for that spec, and when we finally flew out to Japan for the PS2 announcement and saw what they were talking about, I said, "Ah, thank God," 'cause we really put our asses on the line. Finally, it met—it just met, basically.

GF: So even with the supposedly incredible horsepower of the PlayStation 2, it still just met your basic requirements?
LL: That's right. Abe's a diamond miner in the mines of South Africa; he's thinking, "Why is the world so messed up? Why are my people and my culture being destroyed? What's going on here, and why are we digging these black pieces of coal out of the ground?" Abe follows that black piece of coal, and it takes him right dead smack into the center of consumerism, which means by the end of the quintology, he's in worlds with Hong Kong, Tokyo, New York-type density. Well, the story was written so that as the games grew, the bases of population the games were played in would grow, too. When we started off, *Abe's Odyssey* was O.K.; it had about ten characters on-screen at a time, tops. But in Hong Kong, we're going to need ten thousand characters on-screen. No one's even pointing at technology today that'll run the fifth game in the quintology, which I think will be two generations of hardware away. Which is really only ten years...

GF: So you're saying the PS 4 would be spec?
LL: By the end of the quintology? Yeah, the PS4.

GF: Will it be five years between games, then?
LL: Well, we're still evaluating... If *Squeak* [a later chapter] could run on a PS2, man? Love to get it out there. This is the basic concept of *Odd World:* the Odd World's ten times the size of Earth. So far, we've only seen Nicaragua, but by the end of the quintology, we'll have crossed one continent and found a whole other world to explore. And if we have to explore that in the meantime because the quintology won't be able to reach the densest

parts of the city, then we'll start exploring other areas... different races, different continents altogether, that still make up Odd World. To us, it's a planet-universe in development, and the closest model—I hesitate to say it after the last film—is "Star Wars." That's the best model of the universe that's really successful, where everything you see is unique and different. The only difference is ours is going to be 100% synthetic.

GF: Can you describe the emotional component of the *Oddworld* series?
LL: Empathy became a critical factor of how we wanted to design games. Namely, if I could feel a little more responsible for this guy, if I could feel more like I just brought him all this way, only to get wasted, I'm that much more emotionally affected. And to me, that's what emotional gameplay's about, conceptually. It's not "I hate that guy because I hit him 50,000 times and he still wins"—you know, the end boss. Emotion is "I hate that guy because of who he is," and we're getting closer and closer to that. You should hate him for the reason you hate him in the movies, not because he's just harder than you are. I believe that same basic paradigm is what should be happening in characters, that we should feel more connected, more responsible. When things go wrong, it should pull the rug out from under us emotionally. We've received letters about *Odyssey* where, you know, a mother would say, "I have two sons, one's six and one's eleven, and every time the eleven-year-old's killing Mudokons, the six-year-old unplugs the game machine." That's more the dynamic you want to try and get after.

The concept is: If I see a living creature, I have two ways of looking at it—I can use it in its natural form, or I can use it by processing it and turning it into something else. So if I see a tree, well, that tree has a life force in it, and if I'm a Mudokon, with a sort of native mentality, I can channel that to my own needs, right? But if I'm a Glukkon, I go, "Man, there's some moolah on a stick just waiting to be chopped down." Both viewpoints are valid, you must decide what you would do.

GF: Exactly—it's just a matter of which side you fall on.
LL: Exactly, which side you fall on, and so, in the world that we're building, we want the consequences of your actions (and those of your opponents) to represent these two different ideologies, even if they're just AI.

GF: Yeah, it would be a lot more interesting if you were fighting someone with a different ideology, not just a different color, different machines, etc.
LL: Exactly. Oh, he's the bad alien from Mars, I mean, let's shoot 'em all—how many times have I heard that one. Oh, the zombies are coming back from the dead, we need to shoot 'em all and protect. Please, guys—some originality. It's so much more interesting if we say, "Here's one side, here's another. Here's your playing field. Now, your interests are in preserving all this, and your interests are in mowing it all down." That way, we not only have physical conflict, but we have moral positions that conflict as well. I think this sort of idea elicits much more passion on the playing field.

GF: Can you touch on the consequence factor?
LL: I'll show you some ways today that we're dealing with the new violent components, which are much more funny, and have more entertainment value. For the most part, we're looking at a neutral guy, just a schmuck that lives off the land. Then this factory opens up, and the management starts recruiting workers. How do they recruit? They walk out, find these neutral guys, clock 'em over the head, then drag them back—and now they're workers. Until you save that guy, he's not back on the open playing field. It's more like you're a government, conceptually. We want you to feel more like a schoolteacher who's managing kids, or a dog walker who's managing some eighteen dogs. It's strange, the things that come out of that, that we feel. They take my guy, I go, "Damn! He's beaten my guy over there, he's going to take him and put him to work. I worked hard for that." There's this extra, demoralizing quality we experience that comes with that. It's one thing if you shot my guys—it's another if I see you over there kicking the hell out of them, dragging them off and giving them a lousy job.

GF: Especially after you worked so hard to try to get him to where he was.
LL: Exactly. And your feelings of revenge are so much greater than if you just got shot, your guy just got shot...

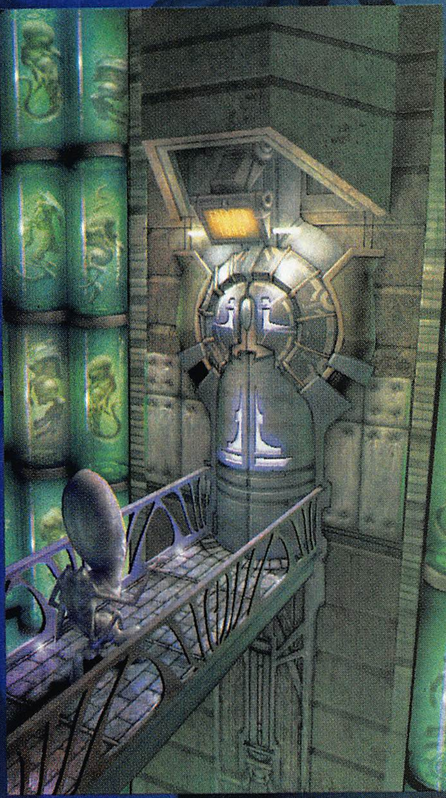
GF: Right. Like in *Exoddus* or *Odyssey*; it's taking it to that next level in *Munch's*.
LL: Yes.

GF: So what it comes down to, really, is you're injecting these games with humanity?
LL: Exactly.

GF: Is that the biggest problem, development-wise (good AI)? Making it a living, breathing world while you're not there?
LL: I think there are so many potential problems, I don't even know which is the biggest. I would guess the biggest problem initially is creative—figuring out how a world sustains itself, lives and dies, is able to come back to life, and is able to be brought back to death, while being run autonomously. And how to maintain a sense of entertainment value while it's doing that, just watching these guys go about their business, the way they do it, and the things that happen in their pre-existent social dynamics. Creatively, that's just a mother... it took us a long time to narrow that down to the simplest set of workable components that are logical, but not so deep that you don't get it.

GF: Are you guys still confirmed for the launch date of the American PlayStation 2?
LL: That's our target. We have the whole studio here focused on that one goal. And that's why I'm saying, when we look at the milestones, the play patterns—if we get *Munch* done, we've got 85% of *Hand of Odd* done, and 80% of *Munch's Exoddus* is done. And the quality of the games will be enough that people won't say, "Yeah, they're done, but they didn't seem like it"—we get to tune so many different types of experiences from this one infrastructure technology. You couldn't think this way on a 16-bit or 32-bit; the technology wasn't enough to think this way. It was too isolated, too specific. But I think you're afforded the luxury now, to think this way.

GameFan would like to thank Lorne Lanning, Sherry McKenna, Gerilyn Wilhelm and the entire Oddworld staff for their time—few in our industry are as genuine and gracious as the Odd!




Take a deep breath and read carefully:
THE MOST ANTICIPATED FIGHTING GAME OF THE
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Interview with Atlus Director of Promotions

MAKOTO SATOU





Q: Since not everyone has heard of *Primal Image*, can you tell me what it is? What type of game is *Primal Image*?

A: The PlayStation 2 will launch March 4th with high-quality, beautiful graphics and amazing detail; the graphics are movie-like and interactive, so you can now move and control them. We want to present controllable, CG-like graphics to the market, but *Primal Image* isn't a game exactly. Instead, it's like a three-dimensional graphic tool. You can pose the 3-D characters on the background and create a customized 'picture,' which should be enjoyable.

Q: So it's not a game really...it's something that lets you model CG-like characters, and you just pose them?

A: Yes, and you can manipulate other characters, items, and background images. Let's talk about how to play: first of all, a motion picture-like scene will play. You move the camera around, taking snapshots, and after you're done taking pictures, you get points. Depending how many points you get, you can move a



girl's body parts, like her arms, legs, or waist. And you can pause them and preserve those graphics.

Q: Do you think a system like the Dreamcast can handle a game like *Primal Image*?

A: Programming for the system is not a problem, but graphically, we do not think it is possible.

Q: Will the game use a modem to download new characters or backgrounds, or something like that?

A: At this time, Sony hasn't released a final spec for modem—or if they have, we haven't seen it. We would be very interested in it, but at this time, we have no plans for that.

Primal Image

Q: Are there any plans to cross over with othe games? To use the data from this program in a dat ing sim, perhaps?

A: This game, *Primal Image*...we're planning to tur into a series, or to release another version. We'r also thinking about crossovers with future games but at this time, we can't comment on that.

Q: Was the game basically built to use the PS2 assets fully?

A: Of the existing game platforms, the PS2 is th only one that can handle it.

Q: I noticed this is *Primal Image* Volume 1. How many volumes are you planning to do after this?

A: We are now working on Volume 2; also there ar plans for Volume 3. But it depends on the market. I people end up wanting a new genre like this, o licensed characters, we put some licensed charac ters in this game. But it all depends on the market.. If people want a more familiar character, we ca work with that.

Q: Licensed characters...you mean like a Reik Nagase (the poster girl for *Ridge Racer Type 4*)?

A: Kind of.

Q: Will the licensed characters appear in Volume 1 or a later volume?

A: She is already a common character in Japanes magazines/animation. Terayuki: She is like the vir

JA 20

tual, three-dimensional girl that you talked about and she's in volume 1.



Q: Will this game be on CD or DVD format?

A: One CD, priced at 5800 yen in Japan.



Q: How many characters are there in the game?

A: Three characters, and each character has three costumes. We also have more than five backgrounds.

Q: Will this be a PS2 launch title?

A: It will probably be released in April.

Thanks for answering all of our questions.

Interview with Tecmo!

Manager of Overseas Dept.
•Mitsuru Tsutsumi •

Producer/Director for Dead or Alive series
•Tomonobu Itagaki•

Director of Deception Series
•Keisuke Kikuchi & Makoto Shibata•

GF: What games has Team Ninja worked on in the past?
TI: The *Dead or Alive* games, *DoA* and *DoA2*, including the PlayStation and Saturn console versions, along with the upcoming *Ninja Gaiden* on PS2.

GF: Is it true that *Ninja Gaiden* will not be released in Japan?
MT: The game is still very early in development. We are working on just the game engine right now.

GF: Will the new *Ninja Gaiden* be 3D, then?
TI: Yes, it will. We are developing a brand-new engine specifically for the PS2. It will be different from the *DoA* engine.

GF: Do you think Tecmo games are more popular in the U.S. than in Japan?
MT: Yes, *Tecmobowl* and *Ninja Gaiden*, definitely.

GF: Do you know why that is?
TI: *Tecmobowl* was an American football game, and football is America's favorite pastime. With *Ninja Gaiden*, it was a very timely title for the American market.

GF: Will fans ever get a new *Tecmobowl* title?
MT: While we would like to do another *Tecmobowl*, we don't have the manpower right now. We are certainly interested in it, since it was such a hit in the U.S. But there's no way it could happen this year... 2001 would be the earliest you could hear any announcements about a new *Tecmobowl*.

GF: What about a new *Monster Rancher*? Would it be on PS1 or PS2?
MT: We have no plans for a new *MR* right now. But the natural progression of the series would be to move to PS2.

GF: What was the development cost for *DoA* and *DoA2*?
TI: In the case of *DoA2*, if you compare it to one of our competitors, it is four times the cost because of the tremendous quality, and the volume of the data is much bigger than that of our competitor.

GF: When are you expecting to release *DoA2* on the PlayStation 2?
MT: No comment now, although we will make an announcement shortly.

GF: Are you interested in doing anything for the Dolphin or X-Box?
TI: Yes, we're interested in both consoles.

GF: When designing the original *Dead or Alive*, were you shooting for the hardcore gaming audience or the casual gamer?
TI: I wanted to create the most realistic action game out there.

GF: Are you going to use the Dreamcast modem to upload scores or download new stages or characters?
TI: The Dreamcast can barely handle *DoA2*, so it's impossible for it to handle any extra files.

GF: How did you make the first *Deception*? I mean, how did you come up with something so twisted and evil in the first place?
KK: It was originally a normal adventure game, but the management asked us to change our line of thinking, so that is what we came up with.

GF: It's a great idea. Did anything in particular inspire you in making the game? Perhaps movies, or previous games?
KK: No, *Deception* was a very original game.

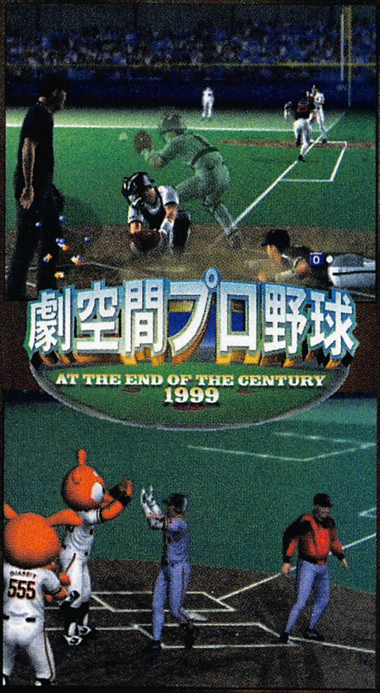
GF: Have you ever considered adding a multi-player mode to *Deception*?
MS: Yes, we have thought about it, but the game balance is a very difficult issue to tackle. With every trap set, the other player can see it. Not to mention if the other guy is trying to trap you, you can just stay still and not get trapped. It is very difficult to balance a game like that.

GF: Have you ever received complaints from angry consumers because of the violence in *Deception*?
KK: In Japan, no. But in America, we received one angry letter for the original *Deception*. But that was the only one.

GF: Well, thank you for taking the time to conduct this interview with us.

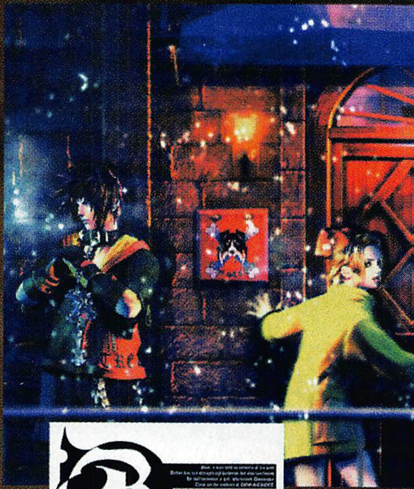


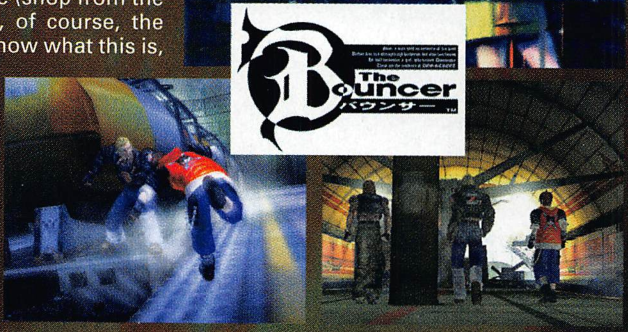




The Square Millennium Event:

The main reason Square summoned about 5000 people to the Yokohama Convention Center was to announce the arrival of Play Online—an online service, and more, developed by Square in partnership with NTT Communications. What's all the hoopla about? It's about an ISP (Internet service provider), like AOL, which also offers a ton of other features, like: sending messages (think Instant Messenger or ICQ), chat (e.g., Squid Central, like #GF_Tavern used to be), games (online?), sports (find the latest stats/scores, and possibly use that data in sports games), music (download songs for your personal jukebox—the Avex Group's a key supporter here), manga (online manga/comic books to replace print), e-commerce (shop from the comfort of your own home), and, of course, the whole of the Internet (if you don't know what this is, you need help). What's the launch date for this tremendous undertaking? It's set for 2001 in Japan, for the PlayStation 2.



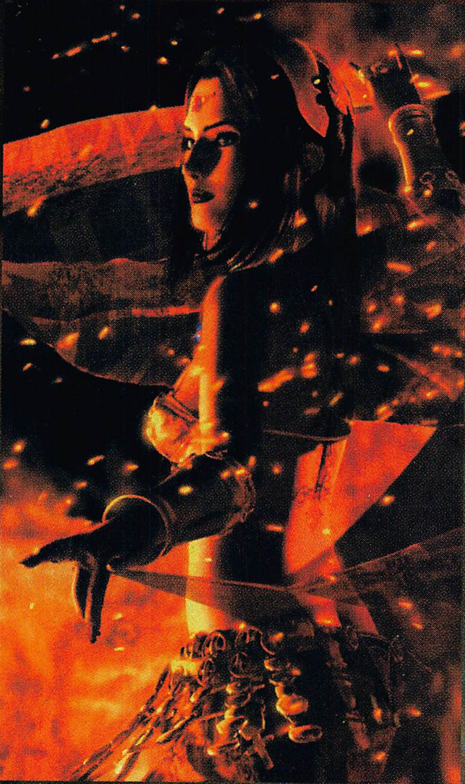


But Play Online wasn't the only thing unveiled at the Square Millennium Event. Not one...not two...**three** *Final Fantasy* games were announced as well, in addition to the screening of a brand-new trailer for the *Final Fantasy* movie! Here's the scoop on everything *Final Fantasy*...





Final Fantasy IX—The final *Final Fantasy* to be released on PS is set for release this summer in Japan. Game footage was shown, along with plenty of CG sequences. Square's promised that the game'll be a 'return to the roots' of *Final Fantasy; FFVIII* was a bit of a departure, leaving many consumers unhappy. Yoshitaka Amano (the man responsible for *FFIV, V,* and *VI*) is designing *FFIX'S* characters, and the black mage with the pointy hat's back as well.



Final Fantasy X—All that was shown of the first *Final Fantasy* for PS2 was basically a tech. demo for the PS2; this game's not due out 'til the spring of 2001—timed with the release of Play Online. In this footage, the camera panned 360° around the character as he surveyed a large environment filled with green hills as far as the eye could see (presumably the world map). Then the character broke out into a run, showing off the smooth animation. As for *X* and *XI*, I'm a bit apprehensive at the thought of a *Final Fantasy* online world/RPG like *EverQuest* or *Ultima Online*, but that appears to be the direction they're heading.

Final Fantasy XI—All that was shown of *XI* was pre-production concept art (artwork stills). It's not certain that *FFX* will be an online RPG, but *FFXI* will definitely be. Just think—if your friends are playing, you can message them, saying, "meet me in the center of Mysidia square, near the fountain next to the item shop." Then, together with your real-life sausage friends or newfound virtual buddies, you can wander the online RPG world of *FFXI* together...watching each other's backs, chatting, and controlling your single character in the party. It doesn't appear to make sense, but *FFXI*'s scheduled for release in the summer of 2001 in Japan. What? Only a few months after *FFX*? Yeah, it may not be the soundest marketing decision...but if it's true, you'd better start saving now, and I **better** be able to be a cactrot....



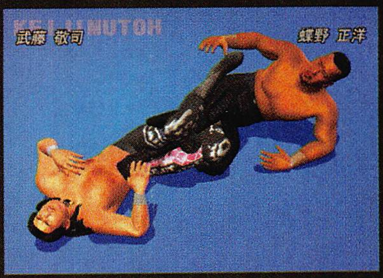


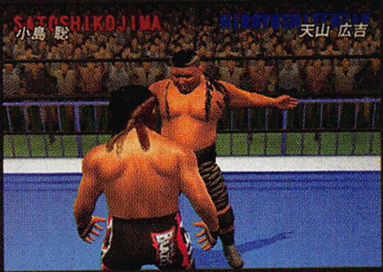


Final Fantasy: The Movie—some critics complained that *Final Fantasy* games were becoming more and more movie-like with every outing... Well, if Square's so good at making 'movies,' then the *Final Fantasy* movie should be pretty frickin' amazing. The second trailer was shown for the first time at the Square Millennium event, and it featured a very futuristic setting. The movie's sci-fi atmosphere may have fans worried, but Hironobu Sakaguchi was very quick to point out that this will still be a *Final Fantasy* movie. It's due out in 2001, though the website for the movie should be up by March of 2000...

After the event, we had a chance to wander the showroom floor to play games such as *Vagrant Story* (PS), *Driving Emotion Type-S* (PS2), and *Gekikuukan Pro Baseball: At The End Of The Century 1999* (PS2). *Vagrant Story*'s solid, as I mentioned in the last issue; meanwhile, the rev of *Driving Emotion Type-S* I played was not very impressive. It was far from complete, but still, this is the highly touted PS2 we're talking about, and I was a bit disappointed to see that *Sega GT* for the Dreamcast looks and controls better than *Type-S* so far. Once again, I have to point out that *Type-S* was not finished yet—but as of this writing, it's still scheduled as a PlayStation 2 launch title, which means it should be on shelves just as this issue hits your hands. Let's hope Square can work some minor miracles, or this could turn into Son of *Racing Lagoon* <wince>. I didn't get a chance to play *Pro Baseball*—the lines were long (gamers were allowed to play two full games)—but it looked much more promising, featuring large, well-sculpted character models and unearthly motion capture.

ALL STAR PRO-WRESTLING





SQUARE MILLENNIUM
YOKOHAMA
2 0 0 0 0 1 2 9



This being my first trip to Japan, I was really excited. Not even the 12 hour plane ride intimidated me... well, maybe the plane food did a little bit, but it was worth it to visit a country boasting 7-story arcades, a Sega amusement park, and the electric town known as Akihabara in which vendors sold only the latest electronic gadgets and gizmos, from cel phones to mini-disc players to video games. It was a fun-filled trip, and when I wasn't visiting companies and seeing PS2 games, I was touring Tokyo, shopping like a madman in a gamers' paradise (more shooters for ECM, some souvenirs for Fury, an inflatable Cactrot for me, etc.).

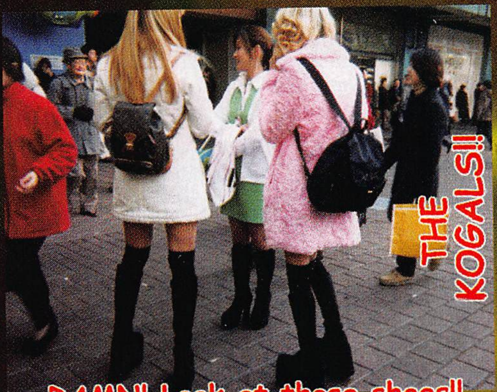
My space here is short, but I have to mention the Japanese arcades. They're very different from American arcades. The controls are guaranteed to work perfectly, the arcades are clean and safe, the players are curteous... and most games cost 100 yen a play (roughly a dollar). While that may seem a bit steep, I found it more than worth it to play arcade games which we may never see in the States, such as Typing of the Dead, Mars TV, and Samba de Amigo. Speaking of Samba, that's my favorite arcade game in a long time. I hope Sega plans to release it on Dreamcast, or if not, at least in American arcades, because that game is incredibly fun. For now, check out these pictures, and we'll be back with more next month when I return to Japan again for the PS2 festival!



"Wish you were here..." - EGGO

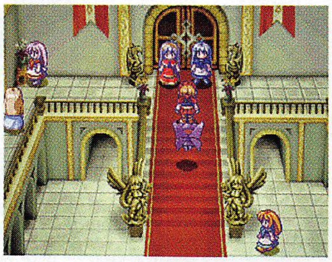


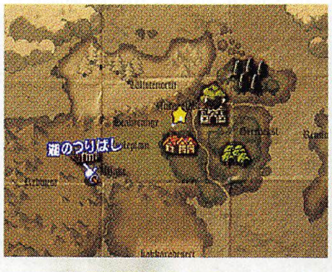
SEGA knows!

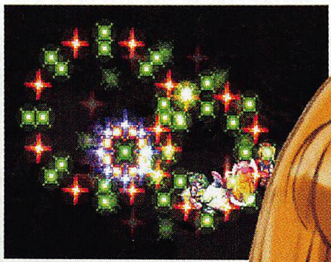


THE KOGALS!!

DAMN! Look at those shoes!!







The year 2000 is here, so why not try something novel to usher in the new millennium... say, equal representation in video games! You're probably thinking this speech belongs more in a polisci textbook than in the immaculate pages of *GameFan*... But how many Princesses must you save before you start craving a different story? How about releasing a game that caters to all the (six) girls out there who play video games? Well, Atlus' next niche release pushes the envelope as far as story lines go, and it surprisingly sparks genuine interest in us.

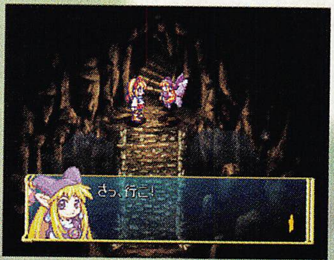




Let's get this out of the way here and now: ECM, Shidoshi, and I like this game (Shidoshi was a given, but he's ambiguously male, so we felt it important to include some 'manly' editors as well). It's about a young girl named Coronet who falls in love with a dashing prince; he's got a bad habit of saving her from peril. Following his latest rescue, he stays just long enough to flash his pearly whites, then, like that... he's gone. Coronet's left to swoon all alone—and her love for him builds till she reaches the pinnacle of emotional bliss... rapture... *Rhapsody* (for the slow folks out there, this is the title of Atlus' latest).

Now, before you question the masculinity of our entire staff (I know... "Too late"), let me tell you why we like this game. If you've been following *GameFan* for a while, it should be pretty obvious from the screenshots why we're enamored with it... it's 2D! Entirely! If you're a misguided soul who believes 2D games are 'ugly' or 'ancient,' I suggest you take that polygon-loving body of







yours, push that crate across the room, and flip the light switch off... you're clearly in the dark. 2D games are where the gameplay's at, nine times out of ten (there are exceptions, of course, i.e., that rare freak of nature *The Adventures of Little Ralph),* and *Rhapsody* only supports my claim.

Underneath the 'flat' graphics lies an RPG with a sound foundation of strategic gameplay; random encounters lead to turn-based skirmishes, similar to *Tactics Ogre*—you handle movement, attacks, and spell-casting. This game was originally called *The Adventures of Puppet Princess* when it was released in Japan (this preview's based on it), but Atlus













EXCLUSIVE EGGO: SOMEDAY, MY PRINCE WILL COME... <WINCE>	DEVELOPER - NIPPON ICHI	1 PLAYER
	PUBLISHER - ATLUS	AVAILABLE MAY '00

chose the simpler *Rhapsody* for its U.S. release.

Atlus has also announced that there will be changes and enhancements to the U.S. release. Other than the obvious textual translation, the Disney-like song-and-dance routines will be fully translated—we're talking English voices mixed with happy J-pop songs. Chances are if you liked the songs of *Lunar: SSC*, you'll want to check out *Rhapsody* (normally, I'd be leery of a U.S. company translating Japanese voices, especially when it comes to singing, but judging from Atlus' work on *Thousand Arms*, I have faith that *Rhapsody* will turn out fine). Finally, once you've finished the game, a U.S.-exclusive "Omake" mode will be unlocked, and you can peruse a game sound test and art gallery. There'll be a difficulty selection screen added to the beginning of the game as well.

Perhaps the difficulty settings will affect the frequency of the encounters. As it stands, that's the only gripe I have with the Japanese version—the random battles are far too frequent. We're talking 'fight, walk two steps, fight again' (you know it's bad when you get two random encounters on one dungeon 'screen'). It doesn't happen all the time, but when it does, it's pretty annoying. Escape is always an option, though, and *Rhapsody*'s loading times aren't that bad—so you never have to fight if you don't want to.

Atlus plans to have this game on shelves in May... we'll be back with a final review soon! E







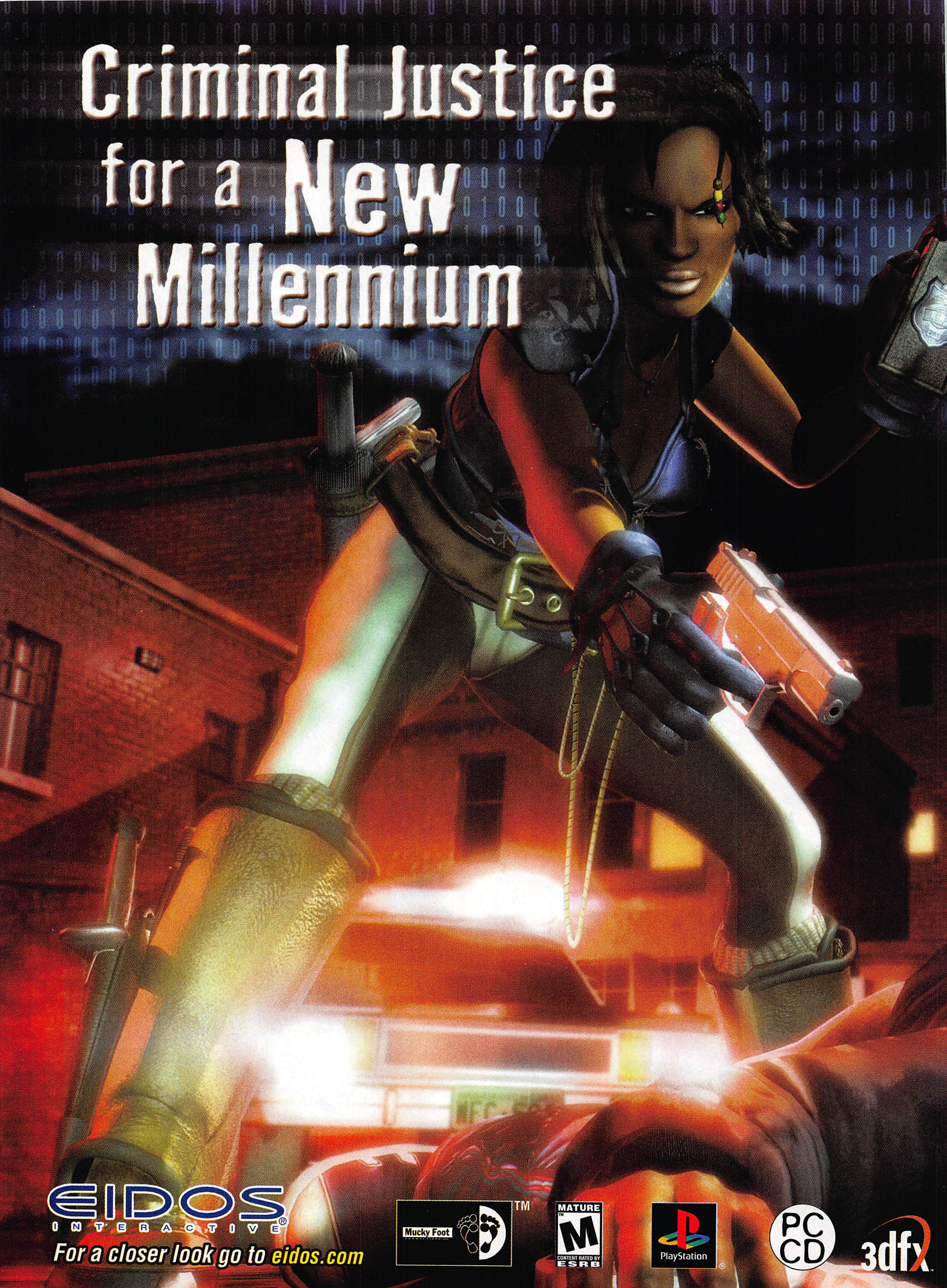










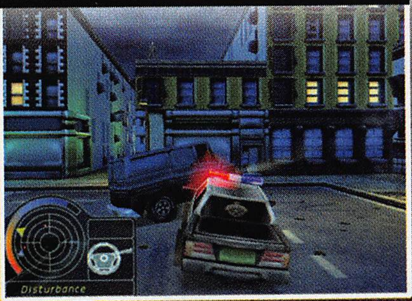


Criminal Justice for a New Millennium
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MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
PlayStation
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URBAN CHAOS™

Darkness falls over the city. Not the kind of darkness that comes with the absence of light, but rather the absence of good. And while many prepare to naively celebrate the new millennium, a small mysterious cult, known as "The Fallen", prepares to fulfill the dark promise of an evil prophecy. Yet, left standing between these "Fallen" ones is a rookie cop and a disillusioned ex-cop.

**One woman...one man...
one goal...survival.**











- Play 1 of 2 main characters - D'arci Stern - an agile, street-savvy female cop or Roper McIntyre - a mysterious ex-soldier.
- Multiple modes of combat. Engage in hand-to-hand fighting, heavy-weaponry face-offs, vehicle chases and building shoot-outs.
- Command a variety of vehicles. Take control of police cars, vans, motor-bikes, hang-gliders, ambulances, trains and helicopters.
- 3D volumetric fog, rain, snow, night and day simulation, wall-hugging shadows and real-time simulation of crashes enhance the atmosphere and action of the game.

What's better than a ten-hit, Ceiling Fan combo in *Deception 2*? How about a twelve-hit, Infinite combo in *Deception 3* (only twelve—most enemies don't live long enough to see ninety-nine hits)?!? And what's more satisfying than unlocking the Volt Rock in *Deception 2*? Building a better Charge Volt Rock 4 in *Deception 3* (one that recharges at a faster rate and inflicts more damage)! As you can see, the masters of gameplay at Tecmo have done the improbable again—taken a great game and made it even better, subtly fine-tuning all the aspects of gameplay.

To the untrained eye, *Deception 3* looks like 'more of the same;' i.e., *Deception 2* with a few extras. But to a fan of the series, *Deception 3*'s much more than that—it's a godsend. Every annoying nuance of *Kagero: Deception 2*'s been fixed. The only thing that hasn't really changed is the graphics, which are still respectable for a PS game. The steep learning curve's been eased with a simple tutorial, which instructs beginners in the ways of trap activation, placement, and crafty feminine wiles. Control's also been improved, with new, instant turnaround and side-rolling evasive moves (just like *Resident Evil: Nemesis'* two new moves).

If you've never heard of the *Deception* series, you're missing out...this game lets you play as a villain for a change. O.K., technically, you're not the villain—you're just an innocent, defensive young girl—but you're performing some rather heinous acts of violence. We're talking about trapping a man with a bear claw, hoisting him by the







DECEPTION III DARK



leg till he's suspended upside down, piercing him with arrows from a nearby wall, then smashing him with an electrified rolling boulder. This is not for the faint of heart—or the uncreative.

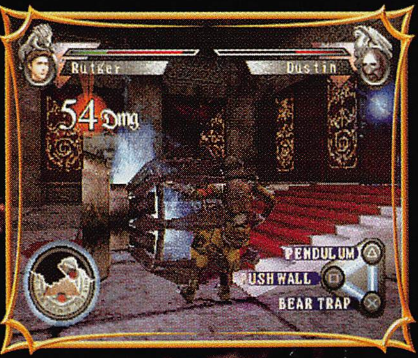


Thanks to *Deception 3*'s new trap generation play mechanic, the combo possibilities are nearly endless. Unlike *Kagero: Deception 2, Deception 3: Dark Delusion* doesn't force you to create any unwanted traps; every trap you build is customized to your liking. Pick the proper emblem to add properties like fire or thunder; choose a single ring to shorten the charge time, or alter the timing; then up the orb count to extend a trap's effective radius and damage power. All of these upgrades cost money, though, and the fastest route to it is the Story Mode.

As in *Deception 2*, the story's a threadbare tale of murder, intrigue, and political plots told in rather broken English (for what it's worth, the translation is better than Kagero's was, but still far from fluent). But the story isn't why you play a game like *Dark Delusion*... it's the "I love it when a plan comes together" feeling you get after landing a satisfying combo, with multiple traps... and, preferably, a Ceiling Fan.



In addition to your standard traps, the devious game makers have added more basic room traps to the castle. Fans of the series will get misty-eyed recalling such classics as the Ceiling Fan, Iron Maiden, and Blazing Fireplace; now you can build all-

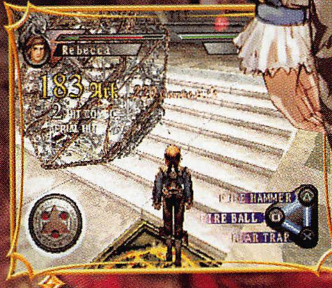




new room traps as well, like the Spiked Mine Cart (how's that for an innovative mine cart sequence!), the 'Suspended Rolling Pin of Death' (perfect for flattening a fearsome foe), and the Collapsible Bridge (ooh, is that electricity-charged water that awaits below?). Combine the regular room traps with the multitude of customizable traps, and you can see the many, many possibilities. As if that weren't enough, *Deception 3* features the same multiple endings as its predecessor, and its replay value's extended even more with a new expert mode.

This mode caters to masters of *Deception*—those who've finished *Kagero* and *Dark Delusion*'s Story Mode and know what they're doing. You should definitely finish *Deception 3* before attempting this mode, though; the traps available in the Expert Mode are the very ones you unlock once you've played through the Story Mode. Expert Mode plays much like *Soul Calibur*'s Mission Mode... you're presented with definite tasks, such as "perform a combo with 2+ aerial hits" (quite a challenge, even for veteran trappers), or "drive the enemy to top of stairs" (knock that guy around like a pinball, with some well-timed Spring/Smash/Catapult Floors!). And if you're crazy enough to finish the Expert Mode (all 100 missions of it), the Man's ending and an extra item to add to your arsenal await you...



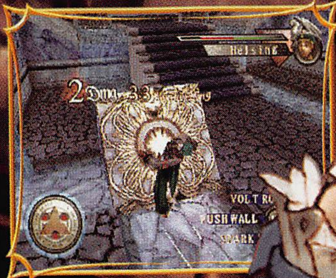




DELUSION







With a mind-blowing amount of custom traps and combos to devise, and the many challenges that await you in Expert Mode, there's plenty of replay bang for your buck in *Deception 3*. I played *Kagero: Deception 2* over and over, every day for three weeks (you had to beat the game at least four times to unlock the hidden Suezo trap). That's an exceptionally long time with one title—for someone who's seen about every game imaginable. *Deception 2* had me totally hooked; *Deception 3* has even more to offer, and I know I won't see a free weekend for at least a month ("Sorry, honey, just one more mission!"). It's easily one of my top five favorite PS games of this year.

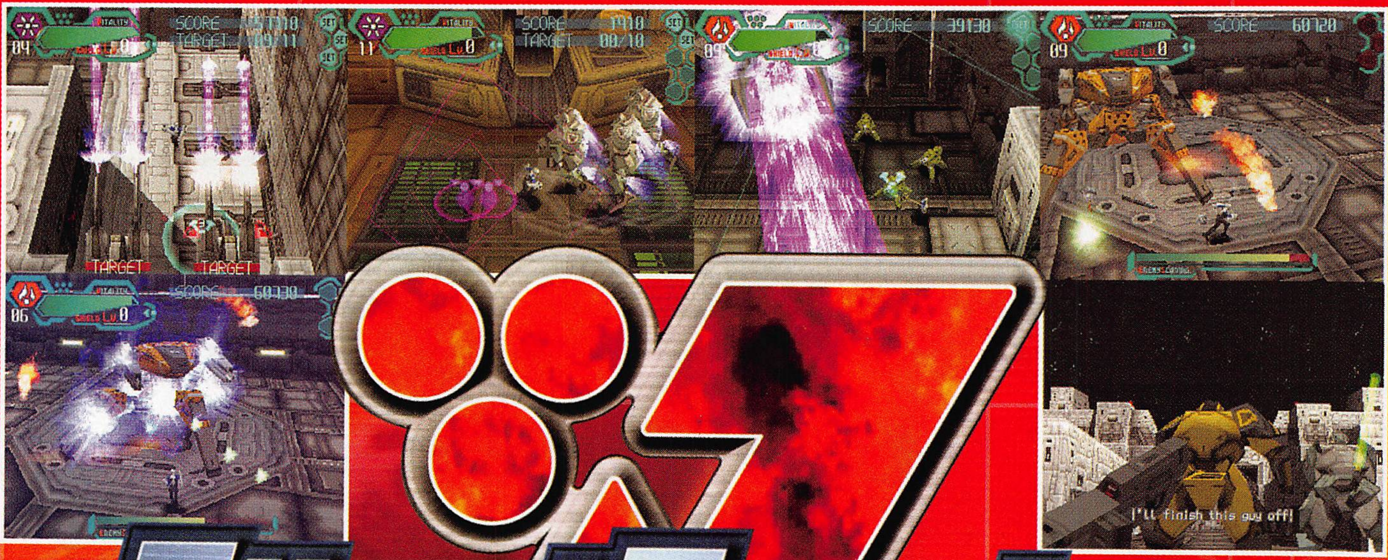
Eggo's completely trapped by the pull of Deception 3*, and has no 'delusions' of escaping anytime soon. Won't you join him?*





VIEWPOINT SCORE	:97	DEVELOPER - TECMO PUBLISHER - TECMO	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOW	EGGO: NO, YOUR EYES DON'T DECEIVE YOU. IT'S A 97.

R REVIEW



Silent Bomber

If you're a die-hard fan of *Dragonball* or *Gundam* games (sadly, they tend to be a strange and confused lot), you're probably familiar with Japanese developer Bandai. While the majority of their titles are relegated to a small audience, the big "B" nearly attained *Pokemon*-esque sales and insanity with a cheesy little device known as the Tamagotchi. I, like so many others, was struck by Bandai's ruthless marketing machine, and was forced against my better judgment to purchase not just one, but several of the lame devices and a slew of imitations like Digimon. I'm doing much better these days (thanks for asking!), due to extensive psychotherapy and Bandai's recent surge of quality games like *Countdown Vampires* and the explosive *Silent Bomber*.

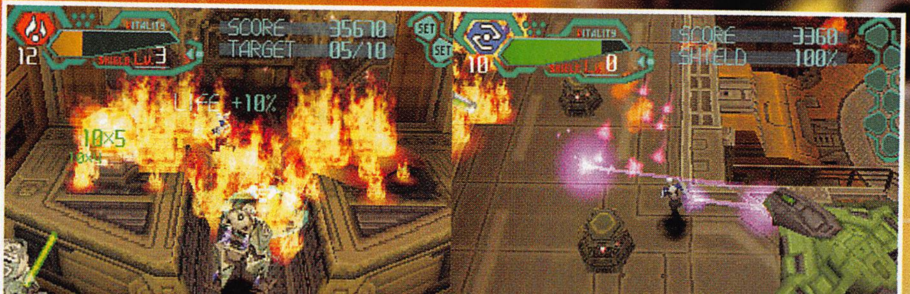
As the name implies, *Silent Bomber* is all about devastating explosions. Fiery blasts trigger an array of singed flesh and jagged shrapnel, and you, Jutah, demolitions expert extraordinaire, are the culprit. Set years into the future, the game's mission is to restore peace by annihilating enemies with a mixture of lethal blasts (not unlike Cerberus after lunch at El Torito). Three liquid bombs are at your disposal: paralysis, gravity, and the old, reliable napalm. Luckily for Jutah's sake, they can be detonated manually, at a safe distance from the ensuing explosions.

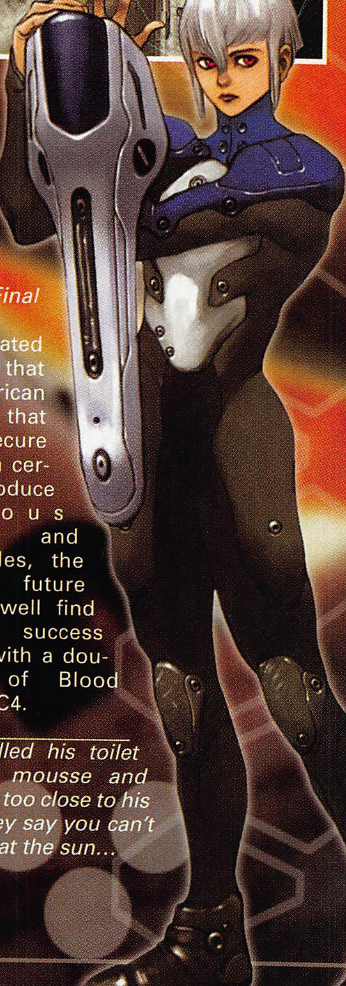
Gamers familiar with *Bomberman, Metal Gear Solid, Contra,* even *Panzer Dragoon* will notice many similarities in *SB*. Everything from the cut scenes to the non-stop action and lock-on targeting system's been inspired by the aforementioned titles. And what it lacks in originality, *SB* makes up for in sheer fun.

With *Countdown Vampires* already in the mix, Bandai seemed intent on creating a game that didn't rely on a long, drawn-out story or complex game play; *SB* relies almost entirely on surface elements, huge blistering explosions, cool bosses, and loads and loads of enemies. With all the countless RPGs and mediocre racing games inundating the PS, it sure is nice to see a pure action title surface in a sea of *Test Drives* and *Final Fantasies*.



Visually, *SB* sports a slightly pixelated look; it's definitely the game play that delivers the real atomic blast. American gamers should feel quite fortunate that this killer import's managed to secure space with U.S. retailers. While I'm certain that Bandai'll continue to produce numerous *Dragonball* and *Gundam* titles, the developer's future might very well find mainstream success once again with a double dose of Blood Suckers and C4.





Fury once filled his toilet with styling mousse and ignited it a bit too close to his face. And they say you can't stare directly at the sun...

REVIEW — FURY: TED KACZYNSKI'S GOT NOTHING ON THIS GUY!	DEVELOPER - CYBER CONNECT PUBLISHER - BANDAI	2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 88



Here's a game that I thought would never come to fruition on the PlayStation: *Street Fighter EX 2 Plus*. My skepticism isn't without reason: Akira Nishitani, one of the men responsible for *SFII* and founder of Arika, is a shrewd businessman. If you read my review of the arcade piece, you'd know that when Nishitani-san and Capcom teamed up to create the *EX* series, he managed to stipulate that Capcom would pay a hefty royalty fee for use of the game engine—when and if it appeared on the PlayStation. Capcom paid the king's ransom the first time around, and, apparently, for part deux as well. The funny thing is that it was rumored Capcom would never agree to pay this fee...

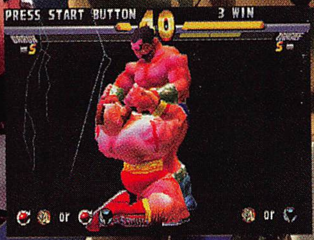
Well, the stepchild of the *Street Fighter* series is here, and as a huge fan, I'm glad to see *Street Fighter EX 2 Plus* (and its sorta-prequel *SF EX 2*, released in limited numbers to various arcades across the country—it's doubtful that more than a handful of players saw this one). *EX 2*'s axed certain fighters and re-introduced players to Blanka, Vega (Balrog in Japan), and Sagat—and its upgrade, *Street Fighter EX 2 Plus*, gives us even more fighters to master.

SF EX 2 Plus sports almost all the characters (no Sakura) and extra modes as its PlayStation prequel—and a few more, most notably the brand-new "Excel" combos and "Director" mode. But goodies aside, what has made and continues to make *EX* more fun than watching Howard Stern (or "Slick Willy") try to stay faithful to his wife has been its true-to-*SFII* gameplay.

For a polygonal fighter not of Capcom proper, *SF EX 2* played incredibly well, lending its Super Cancels and combo craziness to *SFIII*. *EX 2* can be played in either the classic *SFII* style, or with the infamous Guard Breaks and Super Canceling that made *EX* stand on its own merits; Super Canceling in *EX* surpasses even *SFIII* in terms of endless possibilities. How does a jump Fierce Punch, crouching Strong Punch into a Chugeki-oh, followed by a Kyakuhougi, cancel into an Excel combo? Crazy stuff, eh?

Whether or not you give *EX 2* a round or two of attention depends on what you think of the series; if the polygonal characters and play mechanics don't do it for you, then the choice is obvious. But if you're an *SF* fan that's never really played an *EX*, I'd say the chances are good that it'll stack up relatively well. It's no *SFA3* or *SFIII*, but it gets the job done.













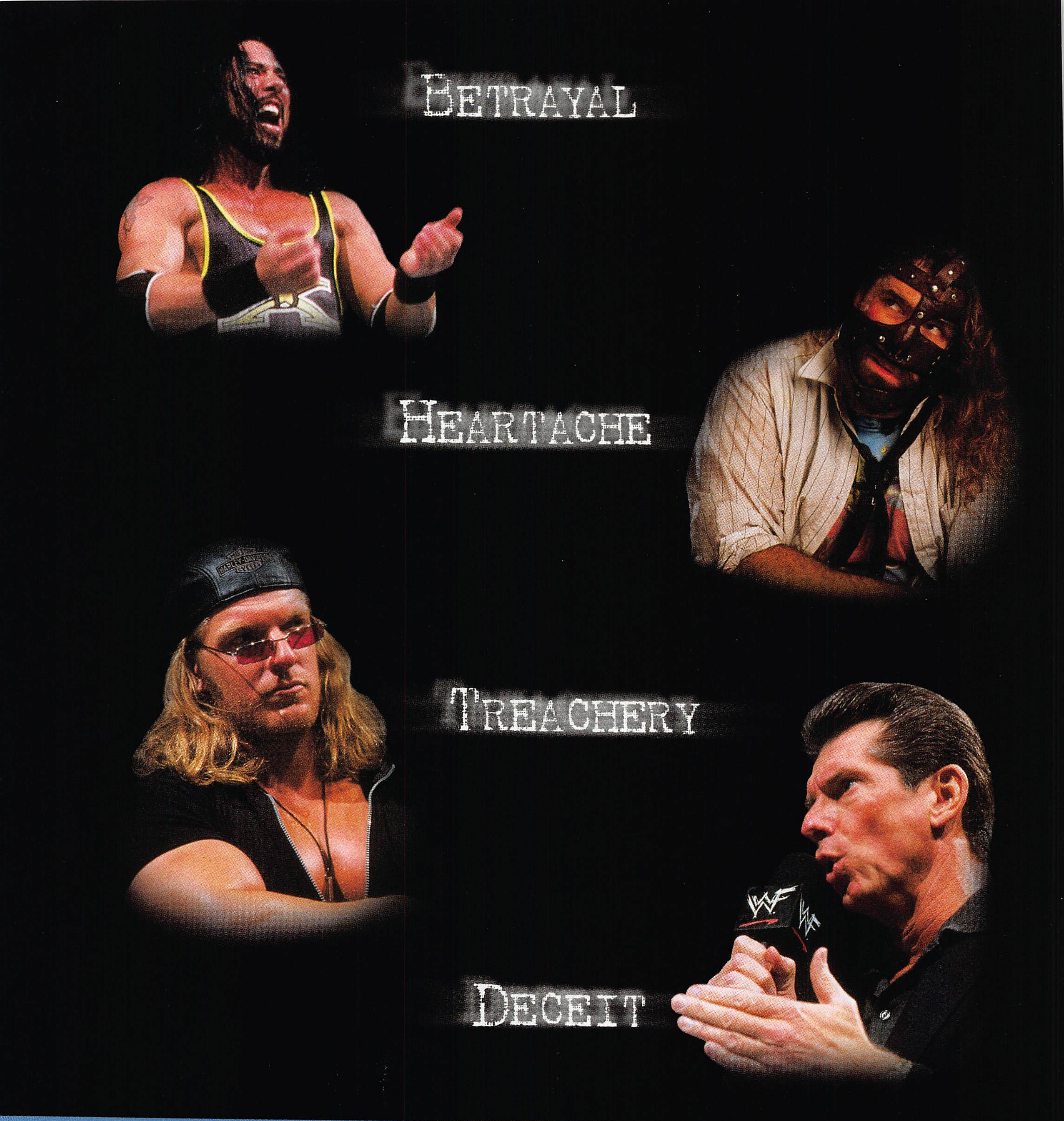


Cerberus says when he squints really hard, SF EX 2 looks like SFIII.

Viewpoint Score :88	Developer - Arika / Publisher - Capcom	1-2 Players / Available Now	Cerberus: Where's *Super Street Fighter II Extra Cheesy Hyper Special Combo Crazy Funky Fresh Edition*?

R REVIEW

PlayStation

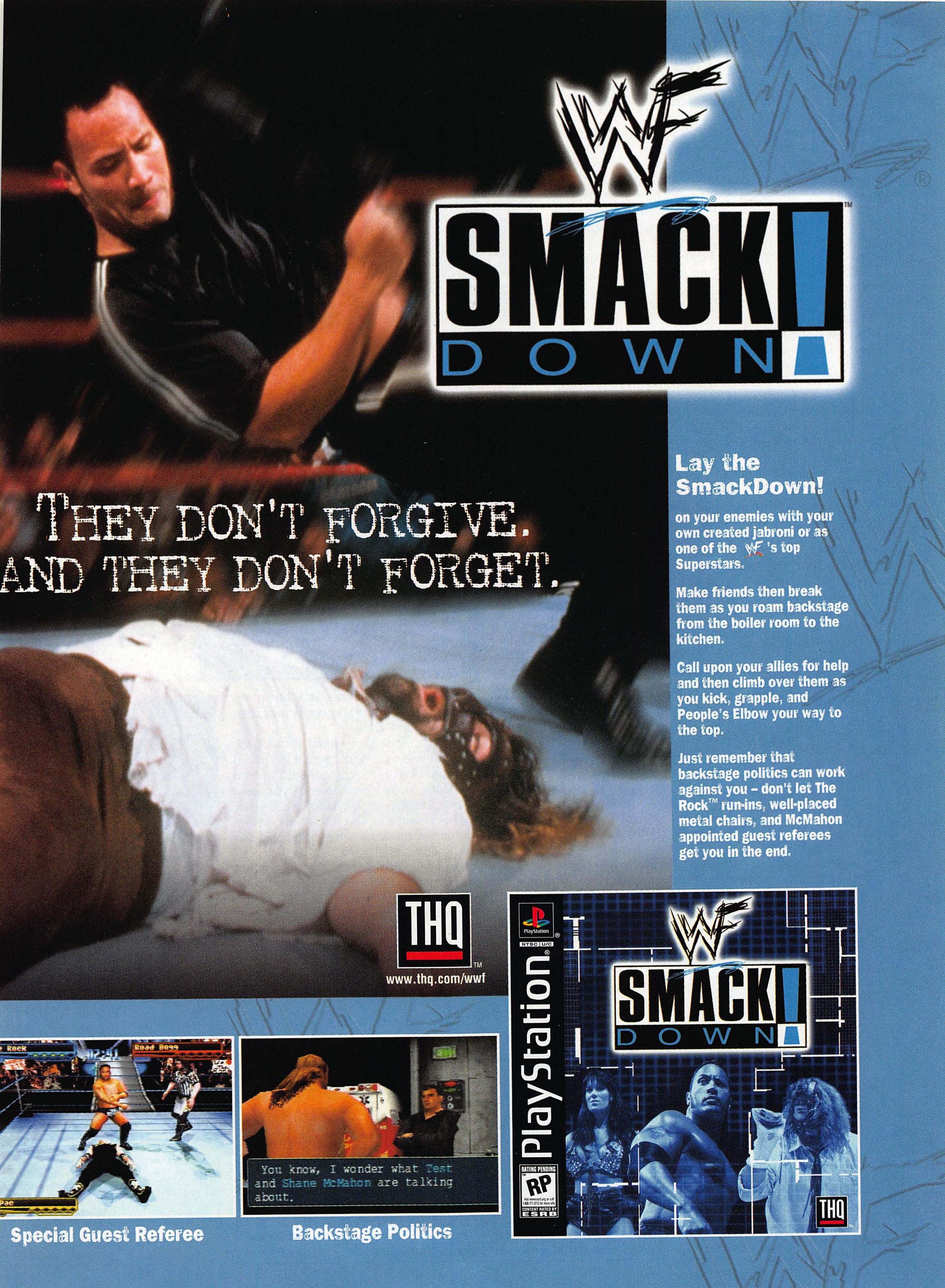




4-Player Action



Huge Backstage Area


WWF
SMACK DOWN!
THEY DON'T FORGIVE.
AND THEY DON'T FORGET.
Lay the SmackDown!
on your enemies with your own created jabroni or as one of the WWF's top Superstars.
Make friends then break them as you roam backstage from the boiler room to the kitchen.
Call upon your allies for help and then climb over them as you kick, grapple, and People's Elbow your way to the top.
Just remember that backstage politics can work against you – don't let The Rock™ run-ins, well-placed metal chairs, and McMahon appointed guest referees get you in the end.
THQ
www.thq.com/wwf
Rock
Road Dogg
You know, I wonder what Test and Shane McMahon are talking about.
Special Guest Referee
Backstage Politics
PlayStation
NTSC U/C
WWF
SMACK DOWN!
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
THQ





Die Hard Trilogy was the first game I ever awarded a ten (<sigh,> for the now-defunct VideoGames Magazine, one of the industry's first casualties, swallowed by... The Nothing)—not so much because it was so far ahead of all other products on the market—but because it gave gamers so much. Its three separate engines essentially made *DHT* three different games in one, each offering enough gameplay to stand on its own.

Well, it's been a long time coming, and Probe's no longer involved, but the sequel (or second trilogy... or whatever...) has finally arrived. This may come as a surprise to some, but the original *DHT* quietly climbed into the two-million range for sales worldwide... not too shabby for John McClane and company. Those days are long gone, however—games of that size and scope can be found across any platform. You'll be hard-pressed to find three such different styles of gameplay fused into one title. The novelty of such a concept's dissipated. The only way for *DHT2* to enjoy the same kind of success is to bring something new to the table.





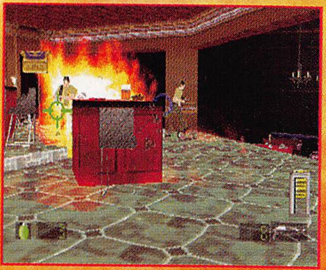
DIE HARD TRILOGY 2

The idea of three games in one is still prominent in *DHT2*; what's changed is the presentation. Instead of dividing each style of gameplay into separate chapters, *DHT2* intertwines them into one seamless story. McClane is in Vegas with an old friend, checking out a new prison facility; this state-of-the-art lock-up houses super-villain Klause Von Haug, a kind of cross between Simon Phoenix and Castor Troy. During a party at the facility, naturally, Von Haug orchestrates a breakout, and John's caught right smack in the middle. Chaos ensues, and Vegas explodes.

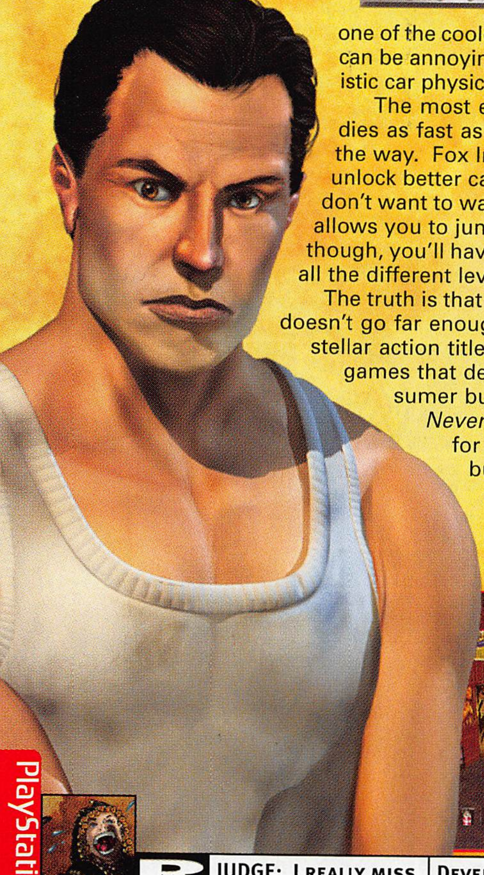
If you played the first *DHT,* you already know what to expect from the second: Run about the third-person levels, shooting bad guys, tossing grenades, and pushing buttons. The transparent wall feature is still implemented, and remains one of the cooler features, though McClane's lack of moves (beyond the strafe) can be annoying. The driving engine is pretty good, but lacks the type of realistic car physics found on so many other PlayStation titles.



The most enjoyable part of the game is the light gun—blast those baddies as fast as you can, picking up various power-ups and special items on the way. Fox Interactive's also added secret sets of car keys; collect them to unlock better cars for the driving portions of the story. For those of you who don't want to wade through the "Story" mode, there's an "Arcade" mode that allows you to jump to the different games; if you want to see the whole game, though, you'll have to play through both modes to unlock all the secrets and see all the different levels (it's all about the ambulance level!).



The truth is that while *DHT2* remains a solid game with plenty of action, it just doesn't go far enough. Over the past two years, we've seen the release of such stellar action titles as *Metal Gear Solid* and *Syphon Filter 1 & 2;* these are the games that define the genre, and compete directly with *DHT2* for that consumer buck. Unfortunately, *DHT2* just can't compete. Like *Tomorrow Never Dies*, *DHT2* will satisfy those who buy it, but it's no substitute for the aforementioned genre-defining titles; *DHT2* is what you buy if *Syphon Filter* is out of stock. It's certainly worth the rental, though, just for the gun game sequences, if anything.



The Judge thinks Mr. McClane paid a visit to the Hair Club For Men....

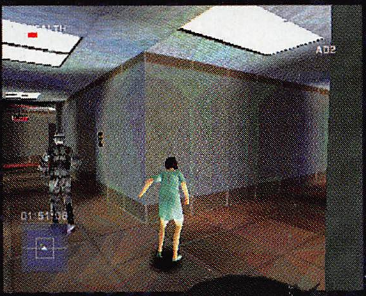






R REVIEW	JUDGE: I REALLY MISS SAMUEL L. JACKSON...	DEVELOPER - FOX INTERACTIVE PUBLISHER - FOX INTERACTIVE	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE MAR. '00	VIEWPOINT SCORE :81






It pains me that we only have one page to talk about this game, but so is life. *Syphon Filter 2* will probably be the system's last great game (though *MediEvil 2* and *Grind Session* are looking pretty sweet). I can't think of a better way for the system to go out, though, than with this title.

You've all played the first *SF* (you better have), so I'll forego babbling about what components went into such a thoroughly entertaining game experience. I'll also forego boring you with the game's story line because, quite frankly, I don't think it really matters. These games are about incredible gameplay and superb level design. They're about the adrenaline rush of killing someone point blank with a shotgun, or liquidating an enemy with a clean sniper shot to the head. The motives behind this action matter little; if you've seen one game about operatives trying to save the world from a fiendish plot, you've seen them all. I don't even sit through the cinematics anymore.

Don't expect any earth-shattering changes from the original, because they're not here. This game's about giving the people more of what they crave: ass-whoopin' covert ops with their favorite spook, Gabriel Logan. Oh, and how much extra there is! Not only will you be allowed to play as Logan, but his partner Lian Xing will be playable as well. You won't have the option of choosing one or the other for any given mission, but will instead take control of each as they work their way through some tough jams. There will be more than twenty levels on two discs to blast (or sneak) through: New York, Colorado, and Russia are just a few of the scenic (o.k., maybe not *scenic*) locales that figure into your mission.

The game arsenal's also been increased to include knives, crossbows, grenade launchers, and flamethrowers (ahh, purification by fire). Some of the new weapons even bring new killing tactics (It's



Syphon Filter 2™

all about sneaking up on someone and guttin' him with your Rambo knife).



The engine itself's seen little improvement, but you'll notice some better textures, a higher poly count, and tiny additions like your breath in colder climates, and some cool real-time lighting. The cut-scenes are o.k., but nothing great... The only reason to even watch them is to gather information—nothing more. You'll notice as you play that there are more checkpoints along the way, to cut out some of the repetition. Hard-core players like ECM scoff at this 'Care Bear' approach, but I have to say I approve. *SF2* has many areas that require several rounds of trial and error (one of the game's few drawbacks), and the added checkpoints only make playing through these areas more convenient.

Look, just buy this game... it's as simple as that. *Syphon Filter 2*'s an improvement over what is arguably one of the best PlayStation games ever made, with more action, more levels, and more Logan. What more could you possibly want...





MULTI-PLAYER?

O.K.—all console game two-player modes suffer from one debilitating drawback: You can see your opponent. This makes it nearly impossible either to sneak up on someone, or, in the case of *SF2*, snipe someone (a head shot is a kill). If you have a problem with this type of gameplay, you're not going to like the multi-player mode here. If it isn't an issue for you, though, you'll be pleased to know that *SF2* has one of the best two-player modes available on a console. Finally, *SF*'s options—like the Sniper mode and auto-targeting—make its good camera angles, weapons aplenty, and interesting arenas even more enjoyable.

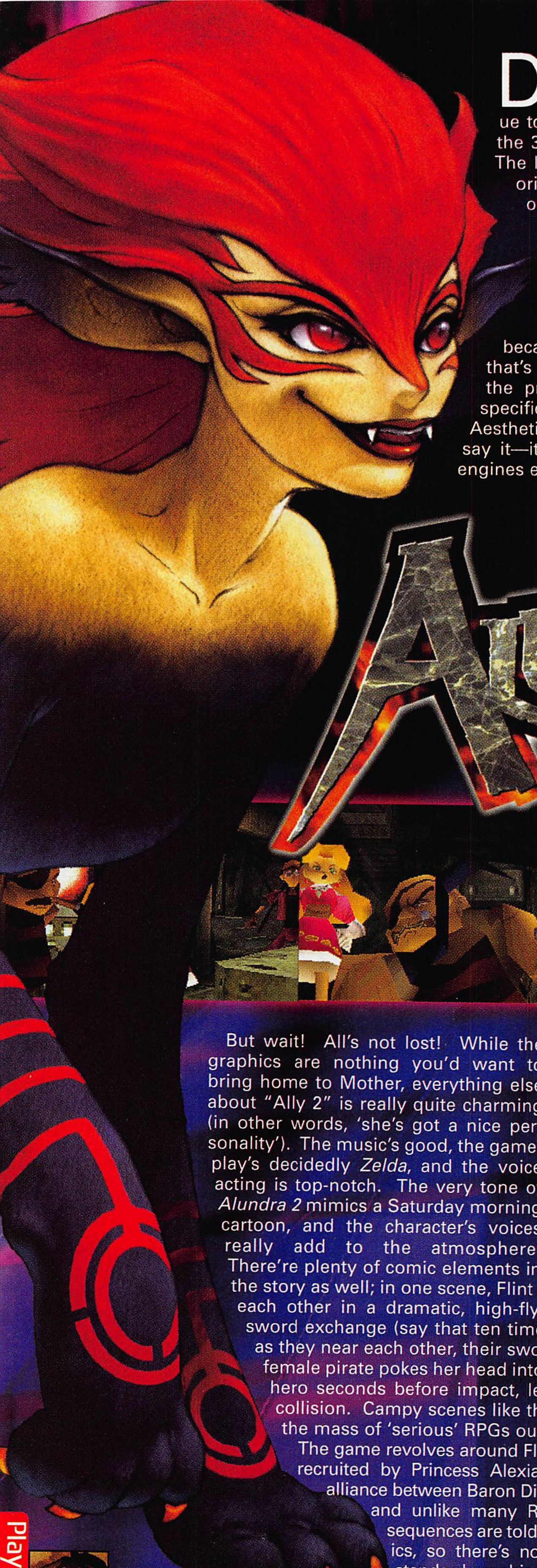
The Judge dreams of the day the government will call on him to do some wet work.



Viewpoint Score :98	Developer - 989 Studios	1-2 Players	The Judge: This is why I
	Publisher - Eidetic	Available Mar. '00	still have a PlayStation...

R Review

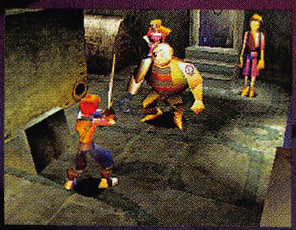
PlayStation



Despite the massive editorials we've written here at *GameFan* about 2D's superiority to 3D, our cries continue to fall on deaf ears as 2D classics continue to topple like dominoes, bowing to the pressure of the 3D giant, and going the way of the evil Polygon... The latest pillar to crumble? *Alundra*—the action/RPG originally published by Working Designs and developed by Matrix. Now, it's inevitably sequel time—and Activision's stepped up to the plate for publishing rights. Yet, alas... alak! *Alundra*'s defected to the 3D ranks, joining other 2D classics such as *Chrono Trigger*, *Legacy of Kain*, and the venerable *Q*Bert* (et tu, *Q*Bert*?) in the land of polys!

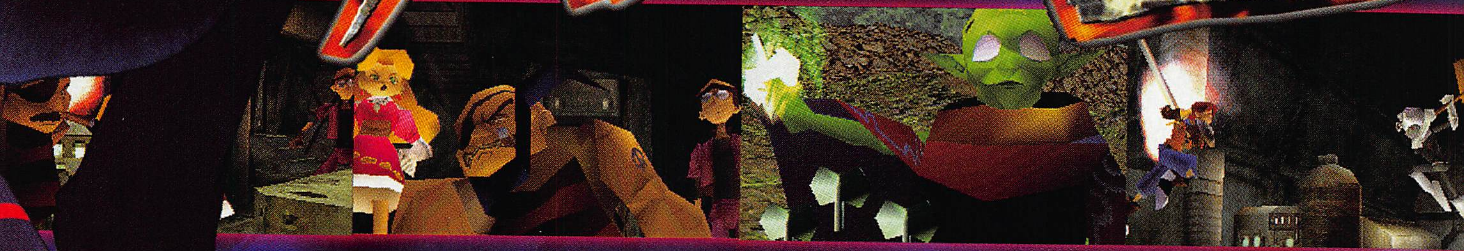
I don't continue to harp on *Alundra*'s plummet because I'm still bitter about the whole thing (well, o.k., that's part of it...); really, there's only one problem with the preview build of *Alundra 2*—its graphics. More specifically, the engine is rather... homely? Unsightly? Aesthetically displeasing? All right, I'll just come out and say it—it's plain ugly, one of the worst 32-bit RPG game engines ever conceived.







ALUNDRA 2



But wait! All's not lost! While the graphics are nothing you'd want to bring home to Mother, everything else about "Ally 2" is really quite charming (in other words, 'she's got a nice personality'). The music's good, the gameplay's decidedly *Zelda*, and the voice acting is top-notch. The very tone of *Alundra 2* mimics a Saturday morning cartoon, and the character's voices really add to the atmosphere. There're plenty of comic elements in the story as well; in one scene, Flint and an enemy jump toward each other in a dramatic, high-flying, slow motion Samurai sword exchange (say that ten times fast). The action pauses as they near each other, their swords about to strike... then a female pirate pokes her head into the room and distracts our hero seconds before impact, leading to a most graceless collision. Campy scenes like this separate *Alundra 2* from the mass of 'serious' RPGs out there.

The game revolves around Flint, our hapless hero, as he's recruited by Princess Alexia to help uncover a secret alliance between Baron Diaz and the evil Pirates' Guild; and unlike many RPG's these days, the story sequences are told entirely with in-game graphics, so there's no jarring transition between standard graphics and movie-like CG.







EGGO: LEGEND OF ALUNDRA:	DEVELOPER - MATRIX	1 PLAYER
A FLINT TO THE PAST	PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION	AVAILABLE SPRING

P PREVIEW













Fans of the first game are probably wondering whether *Alundra 2* has the same gut-wrenchingly frustrating puzzles; well, for better or for worse, it doesn't appear that way... I haven't finished the game yet, but *Alundra 2*'s puzzles seem pretty simple so far <crossing fingers>. Maybe that's one of the side effects of making it a 3D game; its puzzles get 'dumbed down' considerably.

In addition to puzzles, you can expect a bunch of *Zelda*-like action/RPG gameplay. Flint can push, pull, run, jump, slide, swing his sword to dispatch evil robot toys, menacing bosses, and ill-tempered bushes ("Take that, shrub—return to the cold, dark earth from whence ye sprung—arr!"), and harbor fugitive gold coins which are rightfully his.

If it isn't already apparent, I had fun spending time with ol' "Ally 2," and if you can overlook the blasé visuals, I'm sure you'll find great enjoyment in the game. Unfortunately, Activision doesn't have final copies yet—so we'll be back later with the full review... **E**











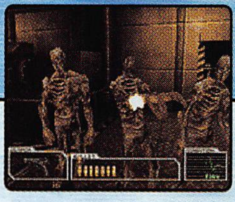


COMING SOON

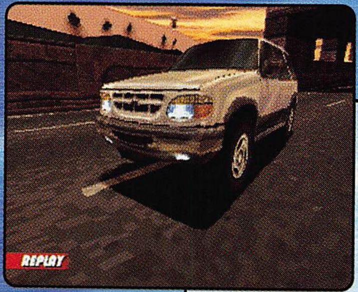
COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

PlayStation

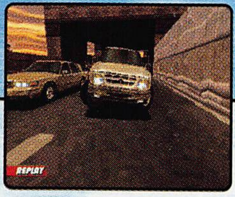


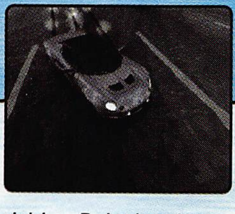
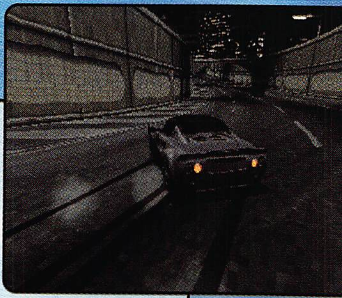




Resident Evil Survivor (Capcom) — Turnabout is fair play; imagine *The House of the Dead* in a *Resident Evil* universe. *Survivor's* one of the few gun games that will allow player-controlled movement.



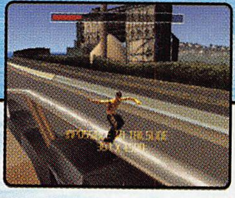


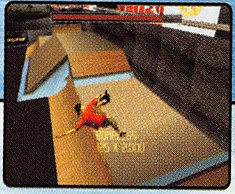
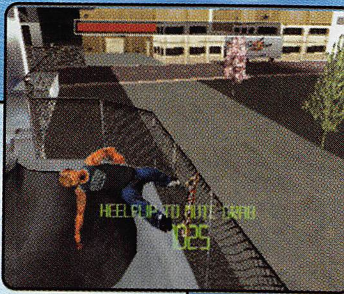


Vanishing Point (Acclaim) — Acclaim's *Vanishing Point* has its sights set on *GT2*. Over thirty vehicles, from the wildly popular Mini Cooper S to the McLaren F1, find their way onto the PlayStation.

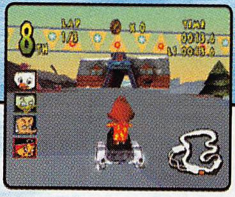
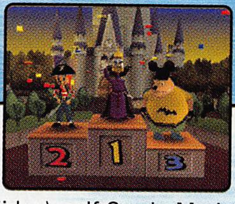




Grind Session (SCEA) — Sony and Shaba hope to dethrone *Tony* as the PlayStation skating king. It'll be quite a feat to accomplish. Get ready to grind!

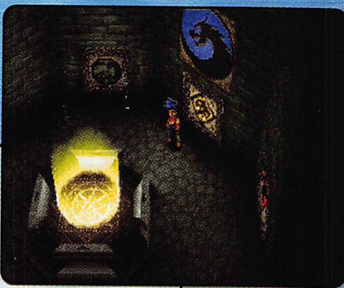


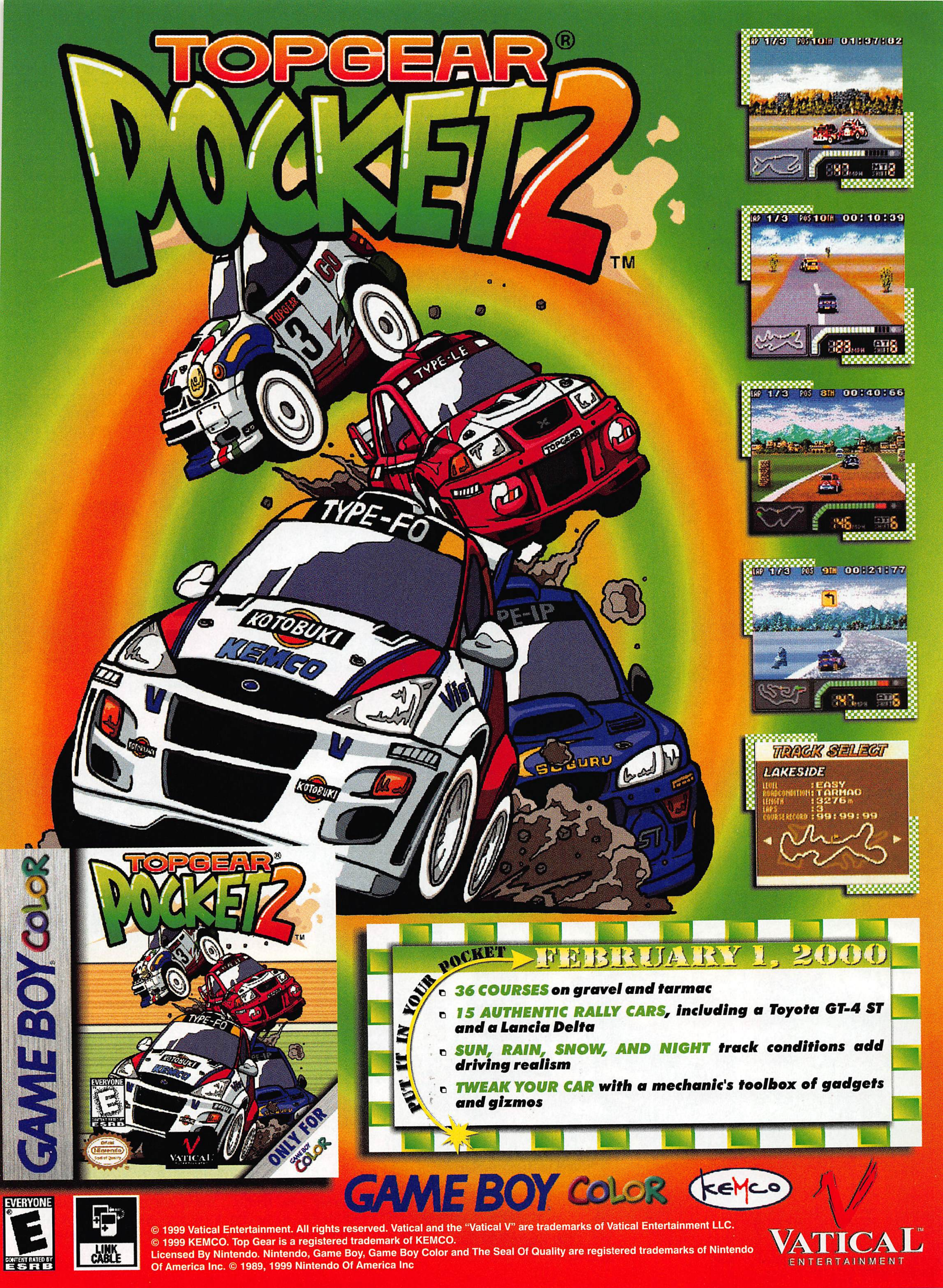


Disney Racer (Eidos) — If Crash, Mario, and every other mascot on the planet can do kart racing, why can't Mickey? From the looks of these shots, *Disney Racer* might give Crash a little run for his money...



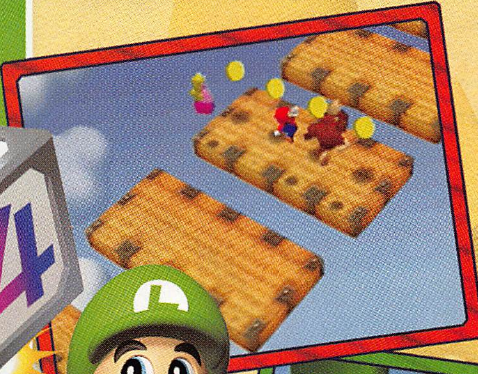



Wild Arms II (SCEA) — Been missing Contrail's long-awaited sequel? *Wild Arms II* is close at hand, and from what we've seen, it aims to please.

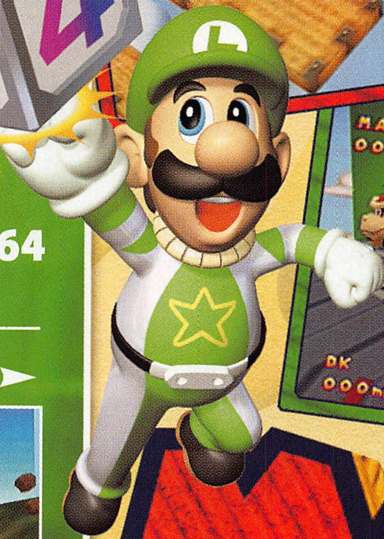

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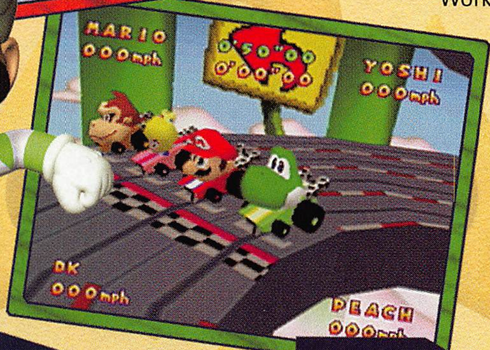
NINTENDO64

Reviews











After massacring hordes of bad guys in *Berserk* on the Dreamcast and tallying a Jonestown-sized body count in *Syphon Filter 2* (I hear the Kool-Aid's pretty tasty), I came to realize how dependent I was on gaming carnage. My constant need for virtual bloodletting began to affect my sanity, both in the office and at home. Roommates, co-workers... my tolerance level began to diminish with each kill—melting the undead in *Zombie Revenge* did little to curb my ongoing frustrations with the Sixth Man. And—saddest of all—not even hunting down Oddjob in multi-player *GoldenEye* could help release my anxiety brought on by ECM's daily rant of "Work, you ungrateful monkeys, WORK!" I was at my wits' end, folks, and as I began to fade into a state of utter depression (with a copy of *Wu Tang Shaolin Style* loaded in my PS), Cerberus handed me my next assignment, *Mario Party 2*. Sure, I might hate my life—but not while playing mini-games in the happiest title since... *Mario Party*?

If your motto is, "I'd rather have one really good friend than twenty who don't understand me," you'd best skip ahead to a review of a one-player game... *Mario Party* simply can't be appreciated against CPU opponents. It's that cut and dried. Sure, you might have a blast puréeing bots in *Quake II* or *Turok Rage Wars*, but rest assured, the same does not apply to *MP2*. It is in many ways the best multi-player title ever crafted (in terms of a game that does not discriminate based on skill). That's right, leave talk of ninja gaming out—nothing in this one requires a hefty learning curve, and all audiences can enjoy EVERY aspect.





If you've played the first *Mario Party*, understand that the sequel's more of a PC Mission Pack than an entirely new game... there are plenty of welcome additions, including forty-four all-new, citrus-filled mini games and five unique boards complete with





two new spaces—but I was still left with the feeling that more could've been done. Perhaps countless years of breathtaking Nintendo sequels have forced me to develop some unrealistic expectations...

Remember how disappointing *Yoshi's Story* was on the N64? It looked good, and had some pretty fun stages, but really offered nothing new in the way of gameplay. Well, the same holds true for *MP2*. Simply put: Hard-core Nintendo freaks and those familiar with the first game will be in heaven—*MP2,* like its predecessor, is a blast. But if you're Joe Gamer or Little Timmy, who already owns the first *MP*, I can't justify spending $60 on a pseudo-sequel.

Now that I got my little rant out of the way, let's delve deeper into the game's new additions... Whereas the original *MP* had separate, playable boards for each character (Yoshi's Tropical Island and Luigi's Engine Room, for example), the new game finds each board injected with a different theme—Space, Pirate, Mystery, Western, and Horror Lands. Depending on which board you choose, characters also come equipped with funny little costumes (I know I'm in Western Land, but nothing quite drives that home like Mario in a cheesy cowboy hat and kerchief).





PARTY 2



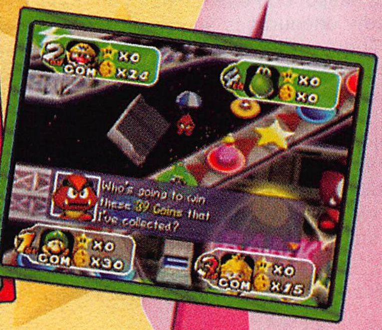
But what of the new board spaces I mentioned earlier? Well, the first is the item space—definitely one of *MP2's* coolest extras. Land on an item space, and go into one of six item mini-games; here, you're presented with a challenging task requiring either memory, timing, or good ol' luck to earn one of ten available items. Items can also be purchased via a shop, if you're as lucky as your pal Fury here (not just any editor can be the punch line of nearly every joke made)—or, rather, if you're fortunate enough to land on an item space. Battle Spaces, on the other hand, basically give players the opportunity to wager coins on one of the eight battle mini-games.

Visually, it's *Mario Party* all over again... what did you really expect? Sure, *MP2* might be a tad prettier than its predecessor (even if it doesn't support the expansion pack), but the game's true focus is on the killer play mechanics. So dust off that address book and close your ICQ window—it's time to do the unthinkable and reinvent your social skills.

Fury wonders how a plumber can afford to have these parties...

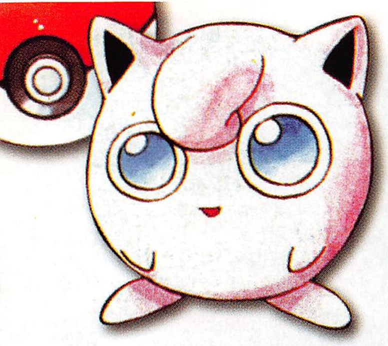






Viewpoint Score	Developer - Hudson	1-4 Players	Fury: Loners
:85	Publisher - Nintendo	Available Now	need not apply.

R REVIEW







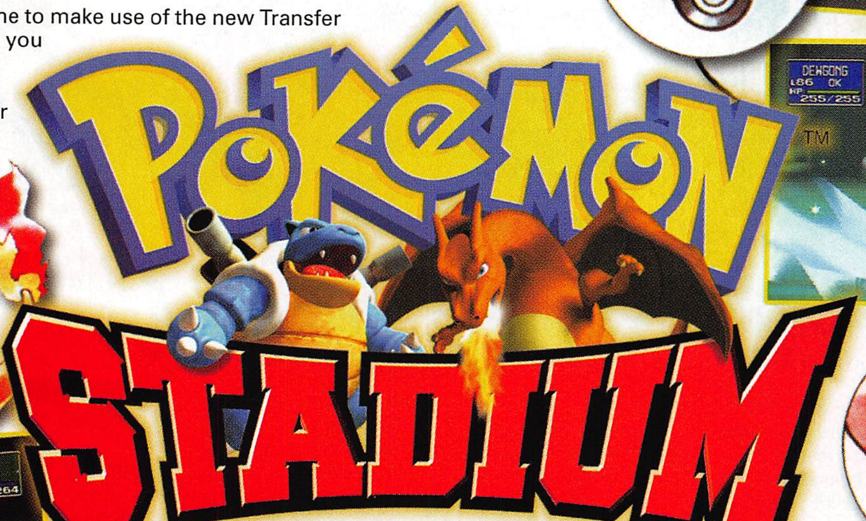


My four-year-old nephew can't remember his own phone number, but can rattle off all 151 Pokémon. Go figure. It's time we all just accepted this simple fact: It's a Poké-world—we just live in it. Give up on trying to understand the phenomenon, because us big kids aren't supposed to understand. Pokémon is something kids can talk about with their friends with a knowing wink; they like the idea that they might as well be speaking Greek to any adult within earshot.

Pokémon Stadium is the latest game to fuel the worldwide craze. Essentially, this Nintendo 64 cart is an evolved form of paper-rock-scissors, except this time, water beats fire, electricity beats water, bird beats bug, and so on. Instead of primitive hand signals, your avatars in the field of battle are the pharmaceutically psychedelic Pokémon.



Stadium is the first game to make use of the new Transfer Pak accessory that allows you to read information from your Game Boy games. Once you've raised your





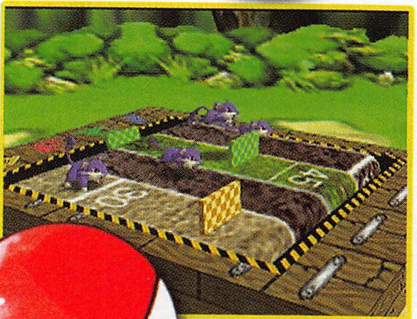






Pokémon to mind-boggling heights, you can upload them onto the N64 and battle friends, or the computer, in far more detailed battles than the limited Game Boy screen allows. In fact, the graphics on the N64 are absolutely gorgeous (as gorgeous as a Snorlax can be). The colors are bright and vivid, and manage to capture the Kool-Aid acid-test visuals that follow many bizarro Pokémon attacks—such as Gengar's nightmarish dream stealing or Mr. Mime's perilous pantomimes.

Even if you haven't put two hundred hours into developing a decent arsenal of Pokémon, you can still enjoy *Stadium*. The complete Pokémon library is available, and different rule sets can curb any advantages a seasoned Poké-junkie might have over an unsuspecting newcomer (for a game that supposedly encourages social interaction, I've seen some Poké-matches turn downright vicious). There are also several mini-games much like those found in *Mario Party*, and a slick little *Snap*-like photo shoot where Pokémon "make love to the camera."



Stadium is surprisingly fun, even for the uninitiated. I proudly refuse to surrender to the fad that's stolen many an American allowance, but I couldn't help enjoying trying to outsmart another human opponent. There's something magical about seeing two big kids scream obscenities at each other while duking it out with day-glo playthings... and we all know the perverse pleasure derived from beating Pikachu into submission...





The Sixth Man hates when his Stock Market Pokémon plummets.

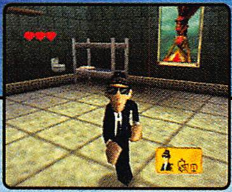
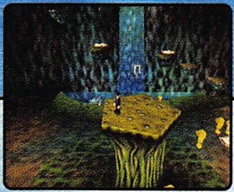


R REVIEW	THE SIXTH MAN: I CHOOSE YOU, POKÉMONSTA!	DEVELOPER - HAL LABS	1-4 PLAYERS	VIEWPOINT SCORE :89
		PUBLISHER - NINTENDO	AVAILABLE NOW	



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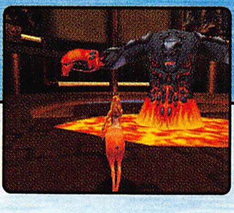
COMING SOON

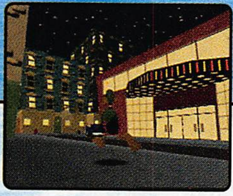
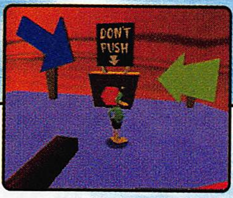


Blues Brothers 2000 (Titus) — Jake and Elwood are on another mission from God, and they need your help to get through five *Banjo*-ish worlds and free their imprisoned pals.



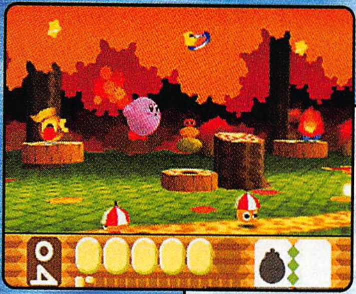
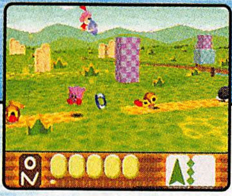
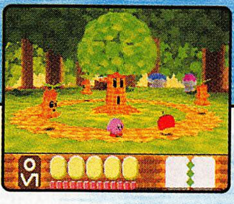



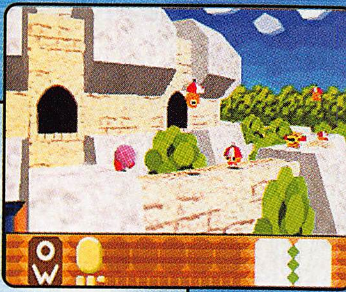

Hercules (Titus) — Player One grabs the Minotaur by the horns. Take one part Kevin Sorbo, mix vigorously with *Zelda*-like gameplay, and voila! *Hercules* is born.



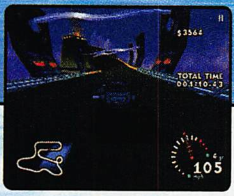

Duck Dodgers (Infogrames) — It's Duck Dodgers in the twenty-fourth and a half century! Yet another solid Warner Bros. license promises a slapsticky adventure game that everyone can enjoy.

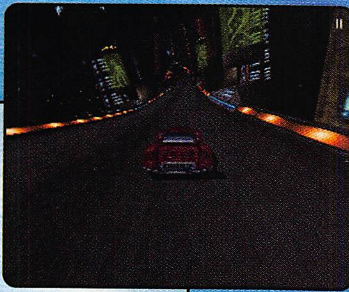


Kirby 64 (Nintendo)—Not to be confused with *Kirby's Air Ride*, *Kirby 64* is a platform game much like its NES grandpa. Let's pray this one doesn't suffer the same fate as *Yoshi's Story*.





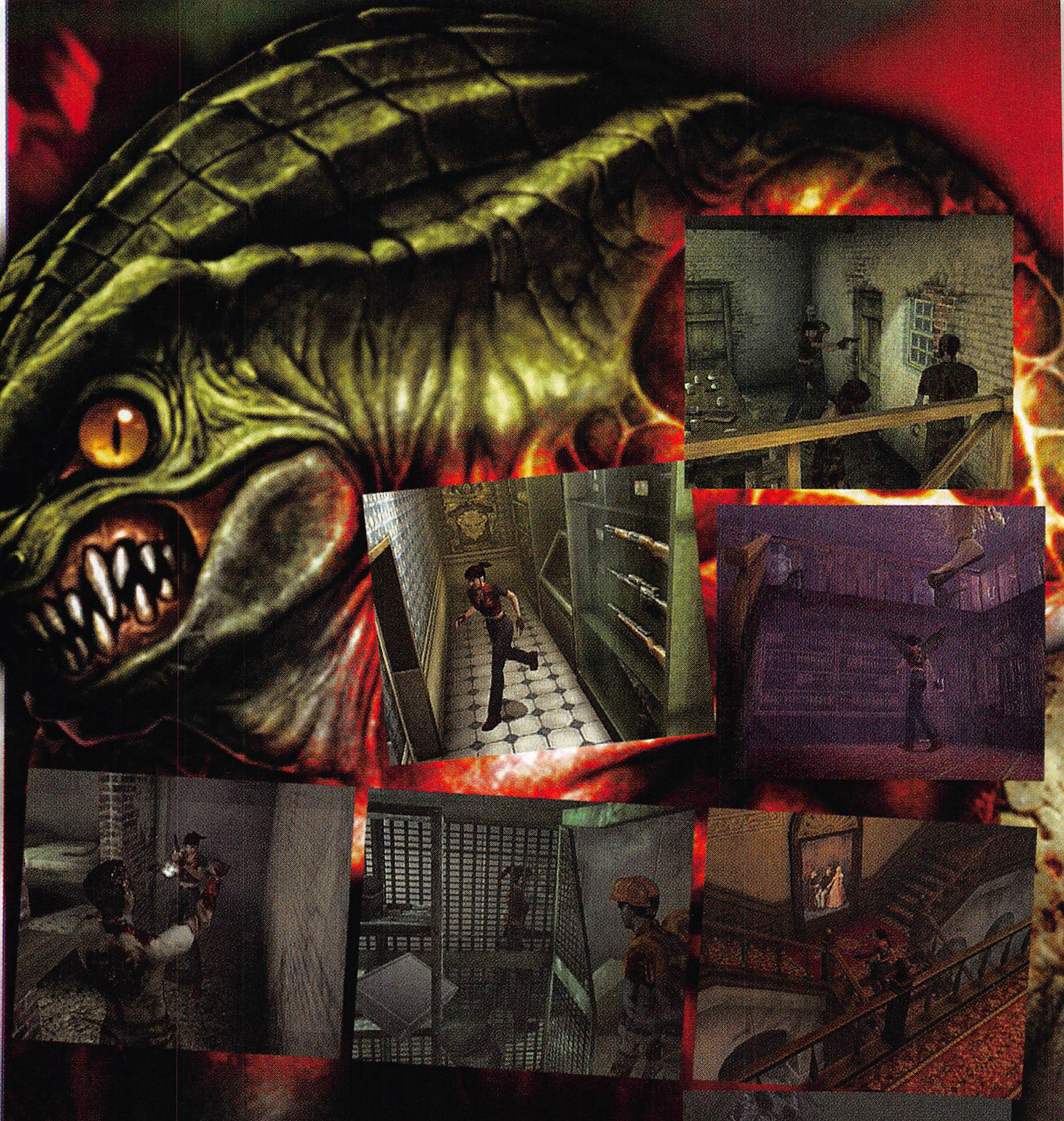




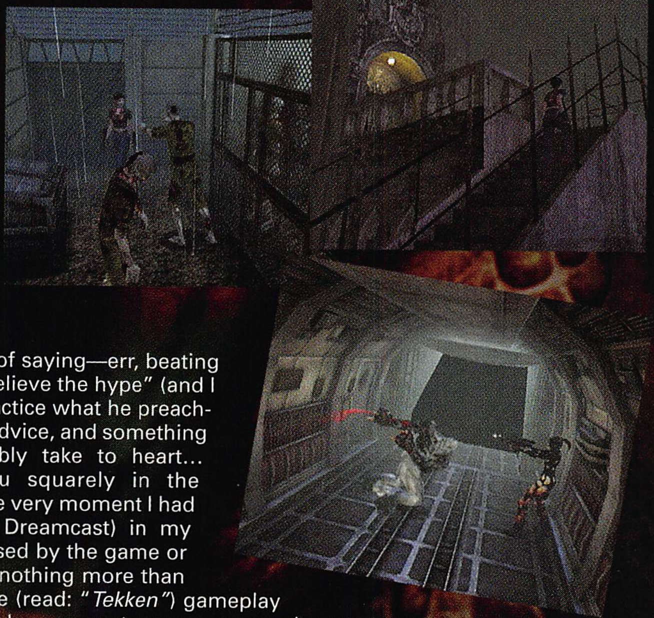
Stunt Racer 3000 (Boss)—Remember Boss Studios, the company responsible for *Spider*? Well, it's time for another racer. *Stunt Racer* looks beautiful and if all goes well should play better than *Star Wars Racer*.



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Dreamcast



Believing The Hype

There are times in the gaming universe when a healthy dose of cynicism is a good thing. For instance, if gamers were a little more cynical, they wouldn't have to eat their words on games like *Final Fantasy VIII* or *Ape Escape*. Of course, at the same time, there are the individuals out there that have enough cynicism for a hundred gamers... unfortunately, I'm one of those people.

As one company rep is so fond of saying—err, beating people over the head with: "Don't believe the hype" (and I kinda wish that individual would practice what he preaches... <grumble>). It's solid enough advice, and something a lot more people should probably take to heart... Sometimes, though, it bites you squarely in the hindquarters. Case in point: Until the very moment I had the final rev of *Soul Calibur* (for Dreamcast) in my sweaty little mitts, I was **not** impressed by the game or its gameplay. I figured it would be nothing more than standard-issue, sub-par, Namco-style (read: "*Tekken*") gameplay with requisite unearthly visuals and heaven-sent arrangements. I was wrong, though; dead wrong. And now I'm here to say again, "I was wrong." What else was I wrong about? None other than *Resident Evil: Code Veronica*.







How Do You Like Your Crow, Sir?

See, sometimes you go into things with certain expectations: I firmly believed that *RE:CV* was going to be just another foray into the *RE* universe (read: "cash run") with little to nothing in the ways of innovation or originality... the "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" mentality that pervades 'the biz.' Heck, I went into this review thinking "Someone's going to pay if this thing doesn't perform," and I was more than willing to take a large battle axe to it (Old Reliable hasn't had a good meal since *FFVIII*). In fact, I adamantly refused even to boot up the early Disc 1 we received from Capcom many months ago, figuring that I wasn't missing anything... oops.

Now, as the thoughts are still fresh in my dazzled mind and I'm feverishly putting words to paper, I'm struck by what Capcom (and Sega) has managed to accomplish here: This is the best *Resident Evil* since the first chapter. While the last two sequels have slowly stripped the innovation and originality out of *RE*, I'm happy to say that it's back, with all the ferocity a bloodthirsty army of the undead can muster.

Raising the Dead

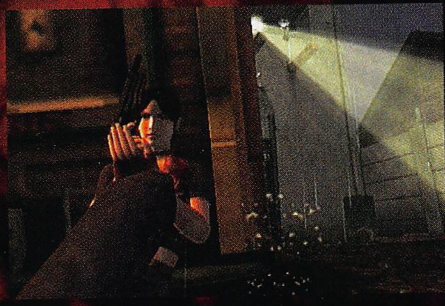
So what's the story? Well, you've all heard it before, but here's the 'ECM Digest' edition: You are Claire Redfield, sister of Chris Redfield, action hero extraordinaire. Well, Chris 'pulled a Copperfield' on a solo search-and-destroy mission to locate and nuke the Umbrella Corp.; he just plain disappeared from sight, so Claire sets out to Europe to find him. Unfortunately for Claire, she doesn't exactly arrive under the quietest circumstances, and soon, she's off killing zombies, mutants, and madmen in the hope of finding Chris. I know that's not much to go on, but I'd prefer to leave the lion's share of the back story to you—trust me, you'll thank me for it later.

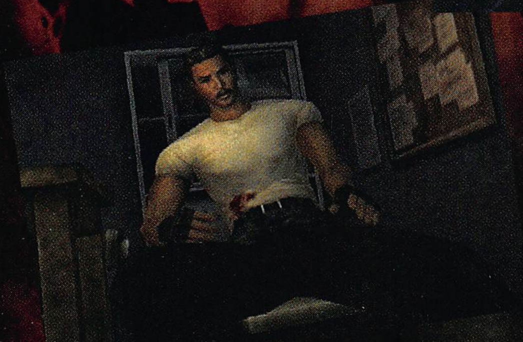
RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA











Riddle Me This

While the puzzles in past *RE* games have been anything but tricky (except maybe for the Furys of the world), you can breathe a sigh of relief with the knowledge that, well, they're just as simple here. As is often the case, *RE*'s graphic adventure-style gameplay (find such-and-such an object to trigger such-and-such an event) can lead to massive bouts of frustration as you hunt high and low for a round peg to fit in a round hole (with plenty of square pegs in your inventory, of course, grrr). Still, I guess it wouldn't be *RE* without some 'brain benders,' right?

Viewpoint Score	Developer / Publisher	Players / Availability	ECM
:96	Developer - Sega/Capcom	1 Player	ECM: *Evil*
	Publisher - Capcom	Available Now Japan	Incarnate

R REVIEW

The Blood... It's so... RED

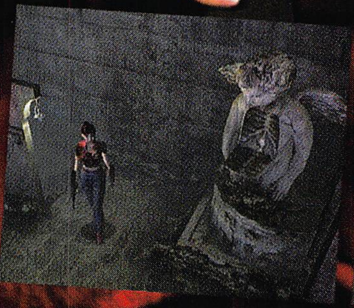
Graphically, *RE:CV*'s a great-looking game. I was hoping for *Shen Mue*-caliber visuals, but what you actually get is just one notch below that. While the texture art is good, the detail level on a lot of the areas leaves something to be desired. Of course, if *Shen Mue* hadn't rolled around, I'd probably be screaming *RE*'s praises from the rooftops... but it did <sigh>.

Naturally, the graphics are all crisp and clean, but that leads to another problem of sorts. The whole world looks just a little *too* neat and tidy, even in dingy areas; I like to call it the 'SGI Effect.' It can be disconcerting when a lusciously modeled zombie's lumbering toward you... it just looks too neat. I rather expected chunks of flesh to be rotting and falling off, that sort of thing (particularly when you're unloading round after round into their decrepit hides).

A Cast of Hundreds

Perhaps the coolest aspect of *RE:CV* is the ability to, once again, change roles throughout the game. One second you're Claire, the next you're Steve (the enigmatic, machine gun-toting, Chris wannabe?), or even a certain other member of the S.T.A.R.S. team (I'll give you one guess...). Claire's equipped with her trademark lock picks and a trusty lighter (you never thought those things would ever be *this* useful). Steve's armed to the teeth with double Uzis, and Chris—well, wait till you get a load of him.

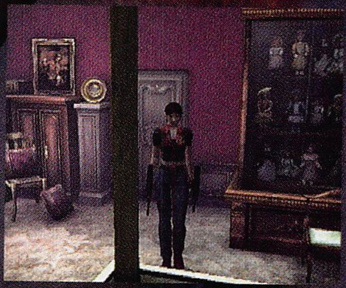




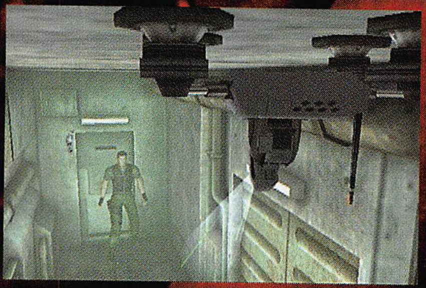


Directed by... John Woo?!

If the cinematics in *RE:CV* convince you of one thing, it's that the boys at Capcom/Sega are huge John Woo fans. From the opening sequence where Claire drops one gun, falls to the floor, catches the gun and detonates some oil drums behind a squad of enemy soldiers, you know you're in for one hell of a ride. Heck, I prefer this stuff to Woo's actual movies (methinks that guy should be doing









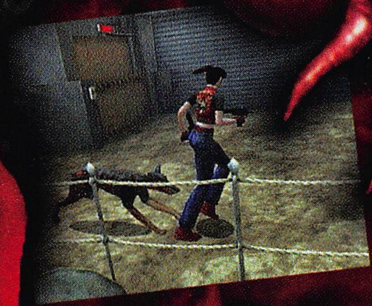
music videos or Mountain Dew commercials instead of films). That's not the only cool sequence... and believe me when I say that one scene features one of the most blazing cinemas of all time (if not the **most** blazing ever)—real-time, no less! Just get ready; when it looks like all's lost for Claire... well, you might just soil yourself.

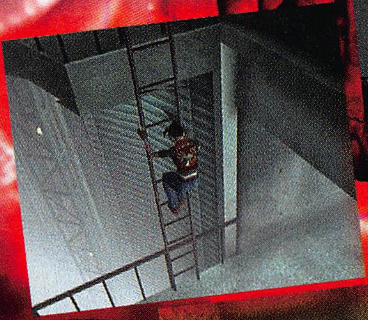
Industrial Light and Magic, Move Over

Not only are the cinema sequences incredibly well directed, but the actual rendered portions are beyond what even Square and Namco have been able to muster: Capcom must have spent scads of cash to create movies of this quality. The opening sequence alone could convince you that an *RE* movie really is a *good* idea... though we all know how that's likely to turn out (must shake memories of *Street Fighter: The Movie*... therapy bills mounting... <urgh>).

Festering Sores

There's **a lot** to love about *RE:CV*, but it's not all daises and sunshine. For instance: Capcom's managed to provide you with far more ribbons than necessary for saving this time around, and enough ammo to make any red-blooded, gun-toting NRA member blush—but it still seems to have an aggravating lack of vitamins and minerals. See, there simply aren't enough healing herbs, sprays, etc., littered throughout the game. Some people (like me, usually) love a good challenge, but nothing's more frustrating than limping around (halfway to becoming a zombie yourself), hunting high and low











for some sort of balm, only to die a half an hour from your last save point because you can't get healthy enough to shake off a bite from a single bat. Now *that's* frustration. Though I guess it certainly helps the challenge level, eh?

Good, Bad, I'm the Guy with the Game...

...and you should be too! It's becoming increasingly apparent that every bloody DC release in the past three months seems to be getting AAA scores (95+); this one's no exception. It's the finest installment in a franchise that was starting to get a little rough around the edges, and that's saying a lot. Clearly, Sega needed something like this in Japan, and Capcom delivered—and then some. I'm willing to go so far as to say that this game's even better than AM2's landmark *Shen Mue*—and if you've actually played it, that's really saying something.



ECM actually investigated (and got a second opinion on) the cost of having his right hand surgically replaced with a chainsaw.





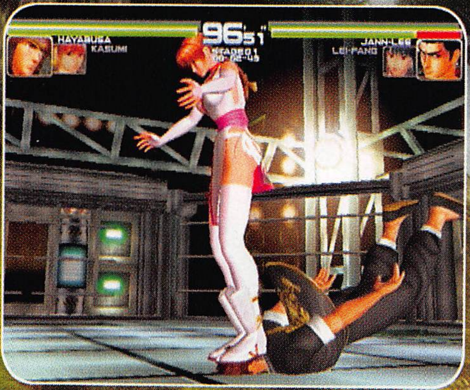




My Kingdom for a Screen Shot

For months on top of agonizingly slow months, we drooled, slobbered, and (on rare occasion) feasted on the few screen shots Tecmo released to a world starving for a peek at their follow-up to the Model 2-bred fighter *Dead or Alive*. Could the blazing textures, glorious color, phenomenal character models and backgrounds—oh, the glorious, eye-shattering backgrounds—possibly make a successful leap to the Dreamcast?

In theory, it was child's play. After all, NAOMI hardware **is** Dreamcast spec, with just a smidge more RAM... But how could that be? How could *Dead or Alive 2* look **this** good running on 'mere' Dreamcast kit?!? Was this another case of a Hikaru (the same boardset that powers *Brave Firefighters*) game that could never make an accurate appearance on the DC? Would gamers everywhere be dismayed by another arcade-perfect-play, busted-graphics port from the SEGA of old (read: "Saturn ports")? Well, you can rest easy, SEGA-faithful—*Dead or Alive 2*'s arrived, and redefined exactly what the world can expect from real-time computer graphics in the process...



Redefining the Word 'Awesome'

If you've perused the pages before you, it's probably pretty clear that *Dead or Alive 2*'s the most graphically impressive video game to date. Stunning, jaw-dropping, eye-gouging, earth-shattering visuals are yours for the taking—and take you will! Of course, some would say that AM2's masterwork *Shen Mue* and NAMCO's *Soul Calibur*

DEAD OR A

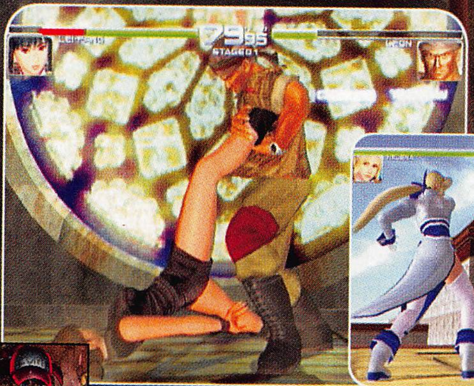


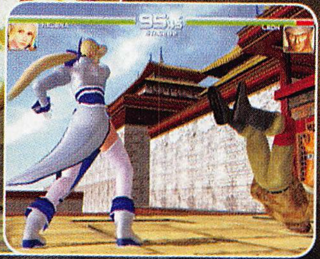
are better-looking games, but they'd be wrong—dead wrong. To quote Fury: "This game doesn't need to be running on the VGA box, S-Video, or an HD-TV to clearly re-define your world graphically. In fact, this thing could be running on a black-and-white TV set, and you'd bow down and pay homage to the masters at Team Ninja." They're big words, yes, but I must concede that they bear the uncanny ring of truth.

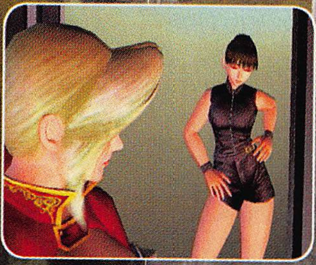
What's so special about the visuals? If the screen shots can't convince you of the sheer graphical force behind this title, maybe my meager words can: You have **never** seen anything like this running on consumer-level hardware. The aforementioned SEGA and NAMCO masterpieces—graphical powerhouses in their own right—just can't compete as a package against the unfettered visual onslaught *Dead or Alive 2* presents... and all this from Tecmo, a name not exactly synonymous with hard-core 3D graphic technology. The number of zeros on the check they must've written to this game's programmer is probably even 'scarier' than the game itself...







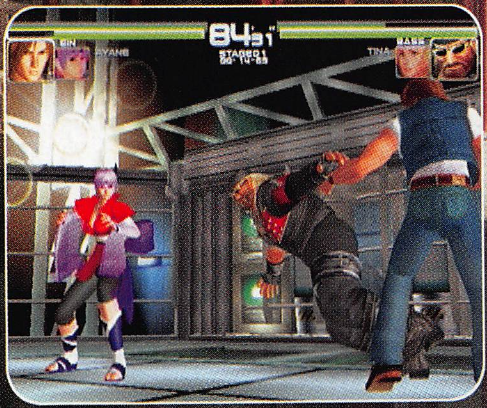






REVIEW	ECM: Most certainly alive!	Developer - Tecmo	1 Player	Viewpoint Score: 92
		Publisher - Tecmo	Available Now	







LIVE 2™

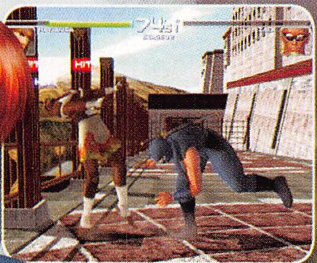
Moving on: The character models are incredible. There may be raging debate as to which game truly has the single most brilliant 3D models (whether it be *Shen Mue, Soul Calibur,* or *DoA 2)*, but it's quite clear that Tecmo's accomplished something incredible—especially in relation to the magnitude of the backgrounds. Whether it's the clothing, hair or even lip animations; the stunning, higher-res, higher-poly cut-scene models; or the 'bounce' of their steps, the *Dead or Alive* models easily hold their own. They're amazing... but it's the fully realized, 3D backdrops that really carry the day.

Remember the first time you witnessed games like *Toshinden, Virtua Fighter 3* (arcade) and *Virtua Fighter 2* (Saturn)? *Dead or Alive 2* will obliterate all those rosy memories and register a new standard in awestruck silence. The main culprit? The backgrounds. The level of detail's absolutely staggering: fireflies, streams, waterfalls, windmills, flags fluttering in the breeze... every tiny, inconsequential, magnificent detail's brought to unearthly life through the craftsmanship of the graphic artists at Tecmo. When you sit back and just take it all in, the game's subtleties are enough to make you catch your breath, gasp in amazement, and marvel over the near-unfathomable beauty resplendent in this game. While witnessing each subsequent match, you'll come to appreciate it even further: water flowing from distant pipelines, the shattering of stained glass as you knock your foe to the courtyard



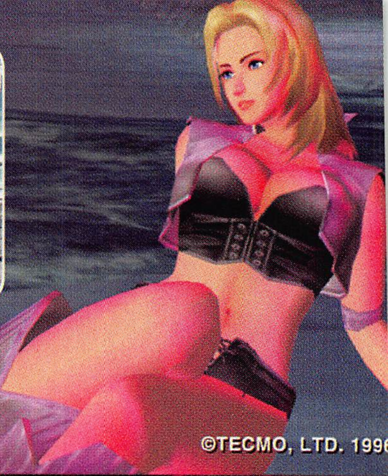












below, the gentle breeze blowing clothing and hair on the elevator stage, and even the more visceral, earthy pleasure of slamming a foe repeatedly 'gainst a marvelously-textured wall. It's simply more than words can adequately convey, and something **every** Dreamcast owner should experience for him/herself (for those of you that don't have one, my condolences).

One Trick Pony?

So you've just read through the hyperbole-strewn graphic-assault rant, and now you're thinking, "If it looks this good, it probably plays like s***." I'm sorry to rain on your parade, Mr. Cynical, but not only does it look over-poweringly insane, it's not too shabby in the gameplay dept., either.

Now, let me get this out of the way first: If you're only into fighting games as a way to make up for your parents' lack of attention (Eggo, for instance), then *Dead or Alive 2* is **not** the game for you. Competition can get intense, but the learning curve's nowhere **near** as steep as, say, *Soul Calibur*'s or *Virtua Fighter 3tb*'s. It's probably more in line with titles such as *Power Stone* and *Ehrgeiz* as far as 'pick up and play' value goes.

The game system's riddled with chain combos and air juggles, much like the first chapter in the *DOA* saga. Like *Power Stone,* neglected children with too much to prove will scoff at the learning curve, and stomp off to play more *Street Fighter* (or some other fighting game that requires years of practice to be even marginally competitive). For the rest of us, though, it's the fighting-game equivalent of a vertical-scrolling shooter—it's easy to sit down, play a few games, and walk away without feeling completely humbled by the gameplay system. Even relative newbies will be at home in almost no time (Fury was pounding on GFO's Hi-Fi in no time after learning the ropes, despite being pathologically bad at fighting games).



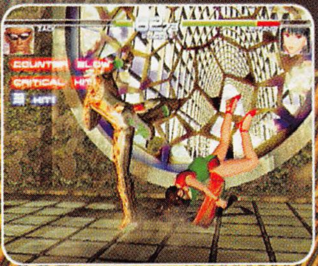
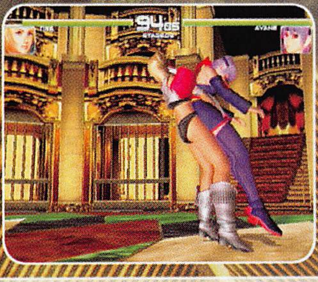


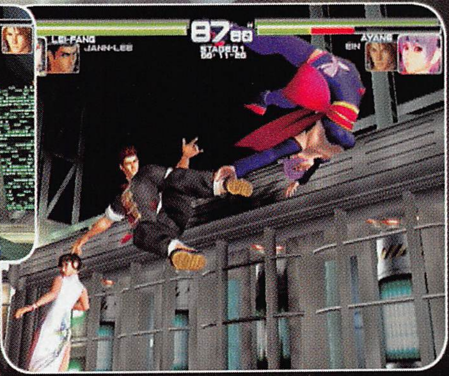
There are essentially two modes of playing *DOA2:* arcade-style, and really cheap. Arcade-style simply refers to how the game handled in the arcade original. See, in the arcade game, in order to move in eight directions, you had to double tap (either up or down) and hold the Free-step button. It was awkward, to be sure, but once you





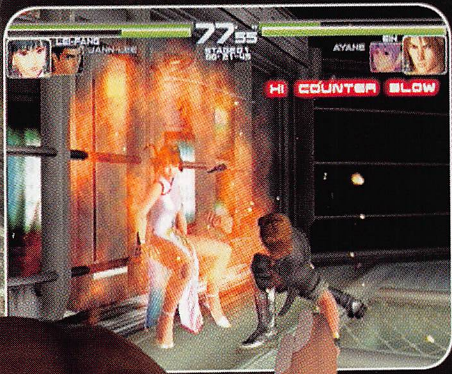




got it down, you could run circles around less skilled opponents. However, in the DC rev, they've given you the ability to Free-step at will, using the analog stick to walk in any direction—no more double-tapping and holding any button required. There's also the handy inclusion of a throw button, for those of you that are incapable of pressing two buttons at once (especially useful for easily countering throws); needless to say, it makes the game more accessible, but it's not like it was all that complex to begin with. And if you've never played the arcade rev before, you'll probably find yourself gravitating toward the simpler control that the analog stick offers. Me, I'm sticking with the original arcade set-up... After all, only the skilled survive.

Tecmo's also added some console-exclusive features, such as a four-player tag battle mode (not simultaneous, mind you) in which each person controls one character. There's now a handy sparring mode as well, that you can hone your combo-juggling skills to a razor's edge. Now if only there was an underwear-only mode... <grin>.



Most Certainly Alive

It may not be the most technically complex fighting game ever crafted, but what it does it does well. Its relatively shallow learning curve ensures that those who do not possess a black belt in tap-tap or quarter-circle motions can compete with the best of 'em, in less time than it takes Eggo to pummel Fury in *NBA Showtime.* As for graphics, well, it simply doesn't get **any** better than this. To be honest, I have to wonder if even the upcoming *Tekken Tag* on PlayStation 2 can compete pound-for-pound with this NAOMI-spawned bad boy. Needless to say, this is yet another notch in the DC's fighting black belt, not to mention yet another killer-app, must-buy, 'gotta-have-it' system-seller to keep it sailing well into the first half of the year... and beyond.



ECM is taking a day off next week for the purpose of attending his induction into the Hyperbole Hall of Fame.







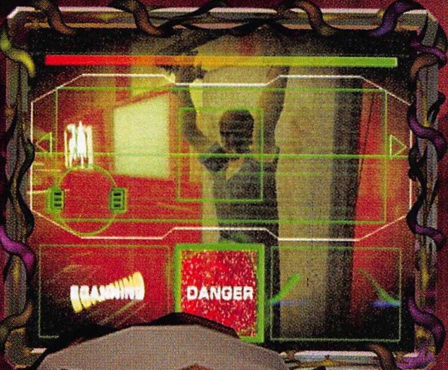



The Calm Before the Survival Horror Storm

As of this writing, there's currently one survival horror game on the Dreamcast: *Blue Stinger* (hard to believe, when about a dozen DC fighters are already on the shelves). While the masses certainly managed to dog Climax's foray into the deep, dark nether regions of *Resident Evil* clones, some (like ECM and myself) found the game chock full of Grade A "Did ya see the amount of hellfire I just unloaded on those zombies!?!" moments. As for the rest of America's gaming populace starved for a brand name SH (survival horror) title, well, have no fear—Jaleco's *Carrier* and Capcom's *RE: Code Veronica* are merely the beginning.

But before I delve into Jaleco's first Dreamcast endeavor, I've got to wonder how the genre continues to flourish when each subsequent title is simply a copy of the original *Resident Evil*. Obviously, the same argument can be made regarding today's fighters and their relationship to (or dependency on) *Street Fighter II*, the granddaddy of modern brawlers—but I'll leave that rant for a later review... perhaps *Guilty Gear 2*? I mean, take the *Tomb Raider* franchise, for example. Though Lara's adventures aren't exactly considered SH, they definitely mimic the play mechanics used in *RE*. While you might encounter a handful of honest-to-goodness puzzles, the majority of the game is spent killing baddies, flipping switches, and locating keys. Now, if I'm not mistaken, Capcom's been employing that same formula with each consecutive *RE* game—and taking into account *Nemesis'* stellar sales figures in Japan, audiences don't appear to mind. Why, then, has the *Tomb Raider* franchise fizzled away at such an alarming pace? Mood—or lack thereof...

You see, like Konami's *Silent Hill* and Capcom's *Resident Evil* series (including *Dino Crisis*), the developers of Jaleco's *Carrier* have taken eerie atmosphere to the next level. That wonderful feeling of "I know there's a bloodthirsty zombie lurking around the corner, I can hear it moaning, and the music's getting awfully climactic" makes for a quality gaming experience... even for the millionth time.







Dreamcast

R REVIEW

FURY: CARRIER, THE LITTLE SHIP THAT COULD. | DEVELOPER - JALECO | PUBLISHER - JALECO | 1 PLAYER | AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN | VIEWPOINT SCORE: 92

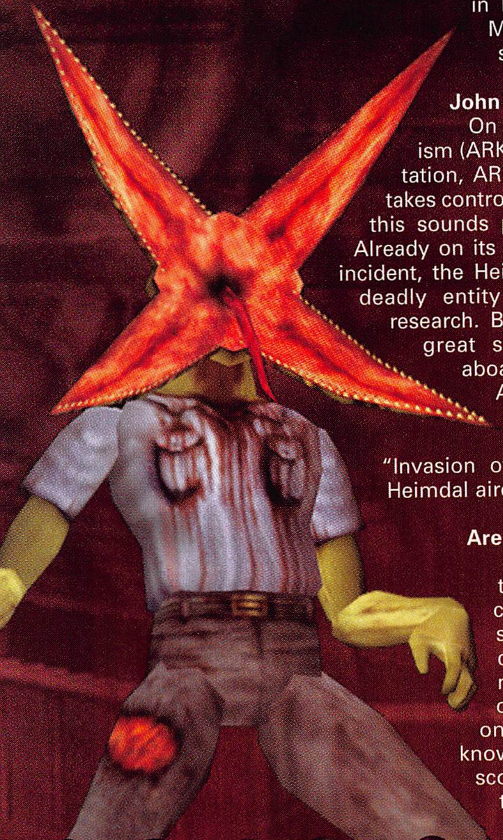






Just Sit Right Back and You'll Hear a Tale, a Tale of a Fateful Trip

Early in the 21st century, the world has been broken into two conflicting hemispheres—known as the North-South conflict. Threatened by starvation and an energy shortage, the Southern countries begin to sprout anti-North terrorist groups, later forming the diabolical Southern Cross. To combat their vicious attacks, the Northern Hemisphere Treaty Alliance (NTA) is put into effect. One of their first missions was to create the Heimdal aircraft carrier,the most sophisticated and well-armed carrier to date. The Heimdal's first assignment (the "Hurricane Mission") is to destroy the base of the Southern Cross. Having succeeded in its task, the Heimdal sets sail for its dock in North America. But like NASA's Mars rover, the Northern carrier soon disappears completely...



John Carpenter Would Be Proud

On a lone island, a prehistoric organism (ARK) is discovered. Upon experimentation, ARK transforms and, via his mouth, takes control of the team's lead scientist. Jeez, this sounds pretty familiar... but moving on. Already on its way home and not far from ARK incident, the Heimdal is ordered to transport the deadly entity to North America for further research. Bad idea. Like something out of the great sci-fi flick "The Thing," events aboard the Heimdal quickly leads to ARK's infestation of the proud carrier and its devoted crew. It's a classic tale in the tradition of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," and the Heimdal aircraft carrier is center stage.

Are You...Human?

As you explore each deck of the carrier, piecing together the convoluted story line, you'll constantly come across frightened crew members. Some have gone mad from the ensuing danger and others are convinced that everyone's been infected. The only way to know for sure is with a customized scope that can detect zombies, see through certain walls and vegetation, and uncover invisible mutants—and that's by far *Carrier*'s coolest feature! Get impatient and head down a hall without scanning it first, and you'll likely be the recipient of some undead lovin'. It heightens the game's mood and tension tenfold, and soon becomes the ultimate tool for locating health (which at times appears so sparingly, it's ridiculous), ammo and access keys.

While *Carrier*'s basically a straightforward scavenger hunt for entry keys, info. discs, weapons, etc., it is by no means an easy game. As I mentioned earlier, health is painfully scattered, so expect plenty of trial and error. Luckily, Jaleco was kind enough to employ a number of save points along the way, which appear to surface at all the right times... I mean, is there really anything worse than a game whose save areas are so spread out and unreliable that recording your progress becomes as frustrating and agonizing as a game of *Irritating Stick* (sorry, Jaleco)? My only complaint about *Carrier* is the amount of slowdown that appears at the strangest moments—i.e., when there isn't a single enemy on-screen, no action whatsoever to slow down the frame-rate. It's a small bug, but an easily overlooked one...





Let's Just Say This Ain't Code Veronica

As much I like *Carrier* and would definitely recommend it to any Survival Horror fan, it's a fact that *Code Veronica* is going to take the steam from Jaleco's seabound vessel. Sure, both games feature real-time backgrounds, ominous lighting effects and awesome character models (though the overall graphic presentation is more spectacular in *RE:CV*), but if you're on a serious budget, are you gonna go with the sure thing, or the underdog?

Fury once went on a cruise as a kid, and after a day of rough waters, threw up on a passenger and had a 'survival horror' game of his own.

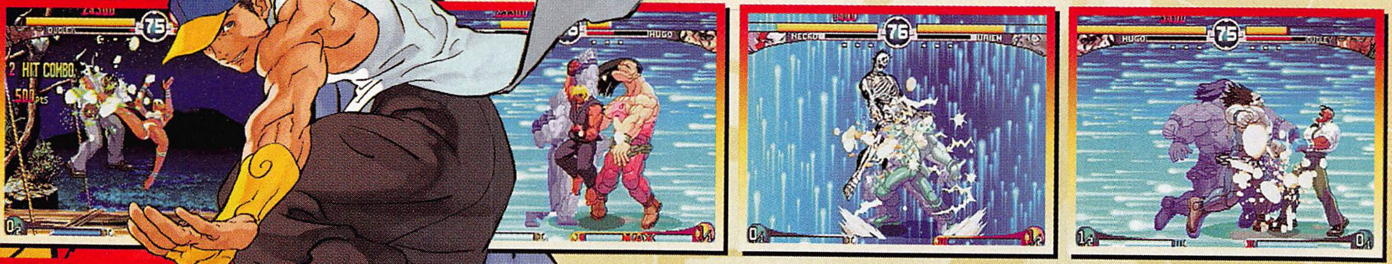
Street Fighter III Double Impact

With the exception of *Power Stone* DC (and perhaps *Vampire Savior* on the Saturn), there has NEVER been a home Capcom product quite as magnificent as *Street Fighter III Double Impact* —worth every darn penny? Damn straight! Missing frames? Not one single animation's been overlooked! Arcade perfect? The coin-op only wishes it were as cool as the DC rev! Beyond my expectations? That would be the understatement of the year...

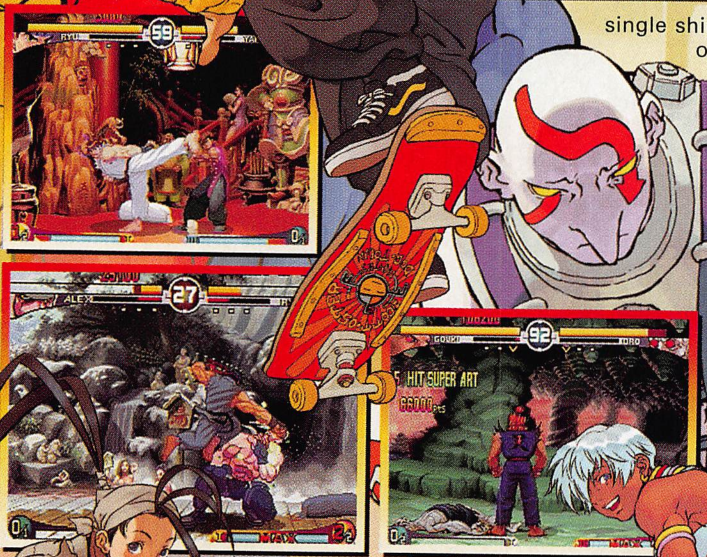
After years of dedicated CPS service, the introduction of *SFIII* found Capcom shopping the market for more powerful arcade hardware—especially that beyond the confines of CPS2. While the age-old hardware had certainly played host to more than its share of *SF* games, the advent of more powerful arcade hardware (SNK's 64-bit Neo hardware, for example) left Capcom with no choice but to take their stable franchise to the next level—CPSIII.

And while Sega's ultra-powerful Naomi board's taken much of the luster from CPSIII of late, few can deny the insanity of *SFIII*'s godly animation. Take Elena and her graceful leg movements... truly breathtaking. Or how about Alex, and his ridiculously animated idle. In fact, backgrounds aside (which have never shone much in the way of depth), has any fighter since the original *SFII* completely redefined the look, feel, and expectations of today's brawlers?

"Two separate *SF* games on one disc?" That's what I kept asking myself after I loaded *SFIII:DI* into my DC... You see, Capcom's notorious for releasing an *SF* game, only to introduce an update months later (usually under the label "Championship," "Hyper," or "Turbo")—and Capcom has chosen to include both *SFIII* plus *SFIII Second Impact* on a



single shiny disc. What about *Third Strike,* you say? Well, like any developer, they're hungry for money. I mean Capcom no disrespect here... but at the end of the day, the almighty dollar is king. After all, why give your audience the whole pie when you can sell off each individual slice?



Along with its return to a more simplistic and balanced set of play mechanics, *SFIII* offers its share of innovations. *Marvel Super Heroes'* extensive inspiration can be seen in the Dashes and Super Jumps. Perhaps the biggest and most welcome of these, though, is the parry—simply tap "forward" on the D-pad before you're struck and repel the attack, whether it's a Fireball, a Dragon Punch, or a Hurricane Kick. But as I mentioned earlier, the most profound change is easily to the game's flow. If you've got a basic understanding of how *SF* plays, you'll find *SFIII:DI* incorporates the most user-friendly and intuitive gameplay ever found in the long-running series.

Still not convinced yet? Did I mention Akuma, Urien, Hugo (*Final Fight*), and Gill are all playable in *Second Impact*? How about two separate intros (yes, things like openers and endings still matter to some people) for each game? Believe me, *SFIII:DI* will be one of your wisest DC purchases yet... I mean, you already own *Bangaio,* right? RIGHT?!?

Fury loves SFIII, *but would rather take Morrigan to the mat in* Darkstalkers.





R REVIEW — FURY: It's all about Yun and Yang...	Developer - Capcom	1-2 Players	Viewpoint Score: 94
	Publisher - Capcom	Available Now	






TECHROMANCER





One of the coolest Capcom releases for the Saturn was definitely *Cyberbots,* the blazing 2D, hand-drawn mech fighter. And if you were fortunate enough to purchase the limited-edition box set (complete with pop-up diorama and hardcover art book), consider yourself quite lucky... Believe me, paying through the nose on eBay is never any fun.

Three years later, Capcom returns to the world of oversized mechs with the 3D, free-roaming, System 11-powered fighter *Tech Romancer.* Some have touted, "*Cyberbots* in 3D;" but the reality is that, while decent, *TR* is far from a triple-A Capcom product.

Now, before I'm condemned for giving *Star Gladiators 2* a higher score, realize that at the end of the day, super-cheap, fast-paced game play is a sure-fire blast. *TR,* on the other hand, plays a bit too sluggish and unresponsive for my tastes. The developers obviously had it in their minds to give these oversized combatants a somewhat realistic feel, but the end result is some rather boring game play. "But Fury," you say, "the supers are so spectacular, and the artwork is some of the best seen in a Capcom game... how could *TR* receive a score lower than a 90?"

Projectiles—once used merely to add an additional element to a fighter's list of play mechanics—have become the focal point of far too many titles. Case in point: *TR.* While our competition might be busy singing the glories of *TR*'s innovative game play, it truthfully comes nowhere near the insanity of *Power Stone.* So Capcom's reworked the life meter system and added selectable items, damage, speed and weapon upgrades—they alone don't make *TR* good. And about the so-called "innovative power-ups"... it's all been done. Anyone remember *Marvel Super Heroes?*

What we're dealing with here, folks, is simply a matter of game play vs. theme. If you grew up on "Voltron" and "Mazinger" cartoons, littered your bedroom with oversized metallic robots, and cried during "Transformers the Movie," when Optimus Prime died—you'll fall in love with the look of *TR*... that fact is certain.

But is it completely innovative? Ahead of its time? Fun? I'm sorry to burst your Capcom-lovin' bubble here, but *TR* is not the revelation it's been made out to be. It has its perks... but then again, so did *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure,* and we all know how that story turned out.

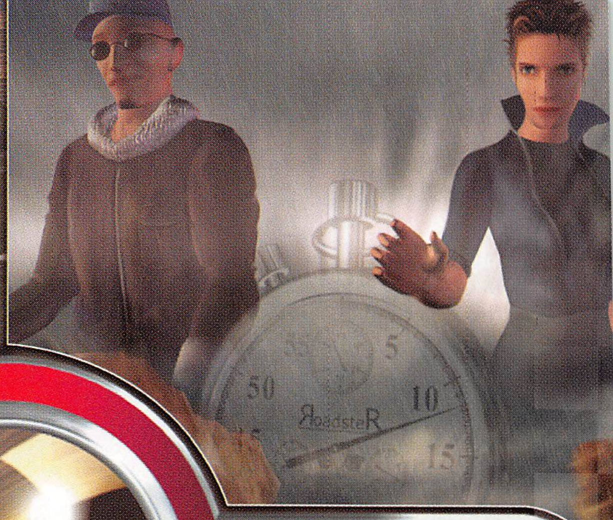


Fury's Points To Think On #1
First week sales Japan:
Tech Romancer*: 24,601*
Virtual On OT*: 116,142*




Viewpoint Score: 75	Developer - Capcom	1-2 Players	Fury: 2D to 3D without skipping a beat?	Review
	Publisher - Capcom	Available Now		





ROADSTERS

On the one hand, you've got developer and publisher Titus, responsible for countless pained gaming experiences like *Superman 64*—easily among the worst crafted video games in recent memory. On the other hand is Player 1, known primarily for the respectable—but often overlooked—*Dead in the Water* and *Robotron X*. Considering the former's less-than-stellar track record, I was more than skeptical (and truthfully, a tad depressed) when given the assignment of previewing Titus/Player 1's newest DC racer, *Roadsters*. At that very moment, ECM walked by my station and dropped some rather disturbing news: "Hey, would ya look at that, another über-Dreamcast racer..." Suddenly, my breath grew frighteningly shallow, and a cold sweat began to form on my brow... Wait a sec—now I remember where I've seen this game before. It's another version of *Roadsters* (albeit developed by a different team—from the ground up), and in all honesty, the N64 game stood out about as much as Waka's famed white background layouts. But on Sega's swirling super console, *DR* might just find a welcome home—parked parallel, smack between Ubi's *Speed Devils* and Infogrames' own *Test Drive 6*.

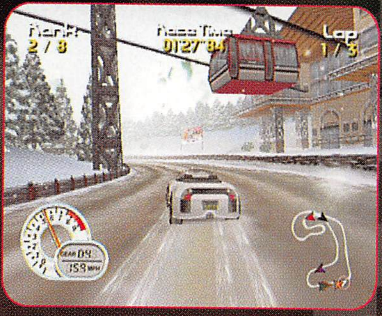
What *DR* delivers to the wondrous world of console racing is light-hearted, *Cruis'n USA*-style game play, a true arcade racer complete with classic control (that's beyond forgiving) and a slew of tracks and cars inspired by real locales and auto manufacturers. Like the licensed cars in the *Need 4 Speed* series, a number of the selectable vehicles are actual models from Renault, Alfa Romeo, Toyota, Ford, Mitsubishi, and Lotus; several other recognizable models simply lack the manufacturer's brand name. The BMW Z3 and Mercedes CLK roadsters, for instance, completely resemble their real counterparts, but appear under the monikers "Equinox SX 400" and "Mind Star 6005."

At the start, players can choose either a quick race with a variety of selectable vehicles, or a standard championship mode. In the championship mode, players must prove their skills to receive enough prize money to pay for upgrades, entrance fees, and, eventually, cars in the $100,000 price range. But will there really be enough interest in *Roadsters* to warrant serious extended play? If you're a hard-core graphics hound, and you were amazed by the likes of *Tokyo Extreme Racer* and *Sega Rally 2*, I'd have to recommend you keep practicing those power slides till *Sega GT* and the stunning *Daytona 2* surface later this year. The world of porting code (especially from a weaker system to a more powerful console) rarely includes the usual upgrades, but the 'from scratch' nature of this version should spare it this tendency, and hopefully, Player 1 will make full use of the DC's numerous technical advantages in the coming months, such as real-time lighting and environment mapping.

If there's one genre that the DC is definitely in no shortage of, it's racing games, and while a younger, unskilled audience will certainly back *Roadsters*' learning curve-free game play, there's still a bit of time left for Player 1 to throw in a few added goodies for the hard-core crowd <ahem, Honda S2000>. Look for a full review in the coming months, and till then, always park with your top up... leather should never be speckled. **F**











PREVIEW	FURY: WHAT, NO S2000 OR BOXSTER S?	DEVELOPER - PLAYER 1	1-4 PLAYERS
		PUBLISHER - TITUS	AVAILABLE MAR '00

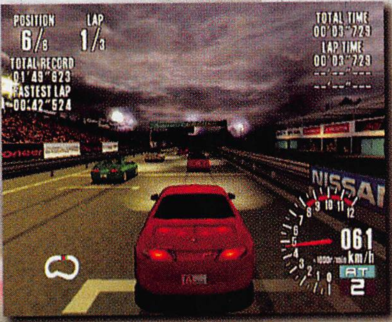
Sega GT

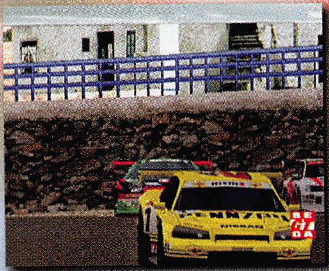
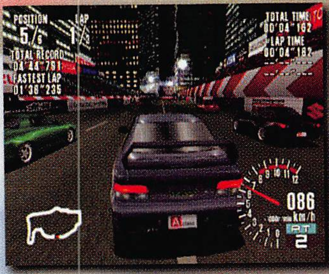
Homologation Special

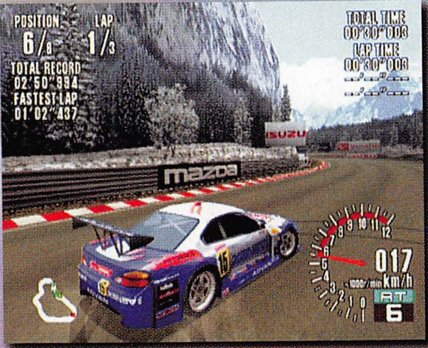
Hype: she's a fickle mistress. One second you're on your knees, a slave to her every whim, her every desire—the next, you're waking up with a nasty hangover, dirty shorts, and a profound sense of guilt and self-loathing... not to mention the fact that you're out fifty bones (we call it the Fury Effect 'round these parts). Such is the slippery slope marketing and PR people must deal with every waking hour of the day... There's nothing worse than a nasty little backlash in the form of thousands of returned copies of a sub-par game that was previously trumpeted as the second coming by an overzealous group of sycophants. Such is currently the case with Sega's supposed super-force, *Sega GT: Homologation Special*—the current king of hype on the Internet, though nary a soul's played it. But, hey, it's fun passing judgment on things we've never experienced, right? Moving on...

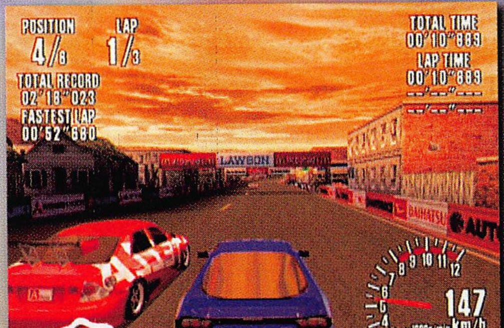
Since the game's so incredibly hyped (not by Sega PR, oddly enough, but by a lot of Internet Sega fans that are hailing it the greatest racer since racers began), we took it upon ourselves to engage in a little stealth action to secure some quality playtime with Sega's latest pony—and we came away just a little, well, disappointed.

"But why, ECM? What could possibly be wrong with the greatest racing game ever?!" Well, let me elucidate you: this game is Sony's *Gran Turismo*... on Dreamcast. Oh yes, make no mistake, this game's a frighteningly lifelike clone of Sony's numero uno driving sim. Everything, from the tune-it-and-go gameplay to the lackluster visuals (screen shots do lie on occasion), ensures that it's a near-carbon copy.





Everything from the gameplay to the graphics scream *Gran Turismo*. The car models look quite impressive, but they're not nearly as awe-inspiring as those found in AM2's *Ferrari F355*. The tracks aren't exactly pedal-to-the-metal excitement, either... Maybe they would be, if the cars didn't move like they were driving in heavy snow conditions.

Now, I don't know about you, but the one asset that'll make or break every racing game is the illusion of speed, and since consoles generally lack anything akin to a sufficient force-feedback option to enhance the experience, **everything** needs to be conveyed through visual cues (no, Dual Shock pads **do not** count). Games like Sony's *GT* do without a convincing illusion of speed (until, of course, you soup the snot out of your car) that most people seem to completely overlook. Needless to say, this is a bit beyond my ability to understand. After all, if I'm going 180mph on screen, it would be nice if it actually seemed like it—not like I'm going 20mph on my mountain bike.

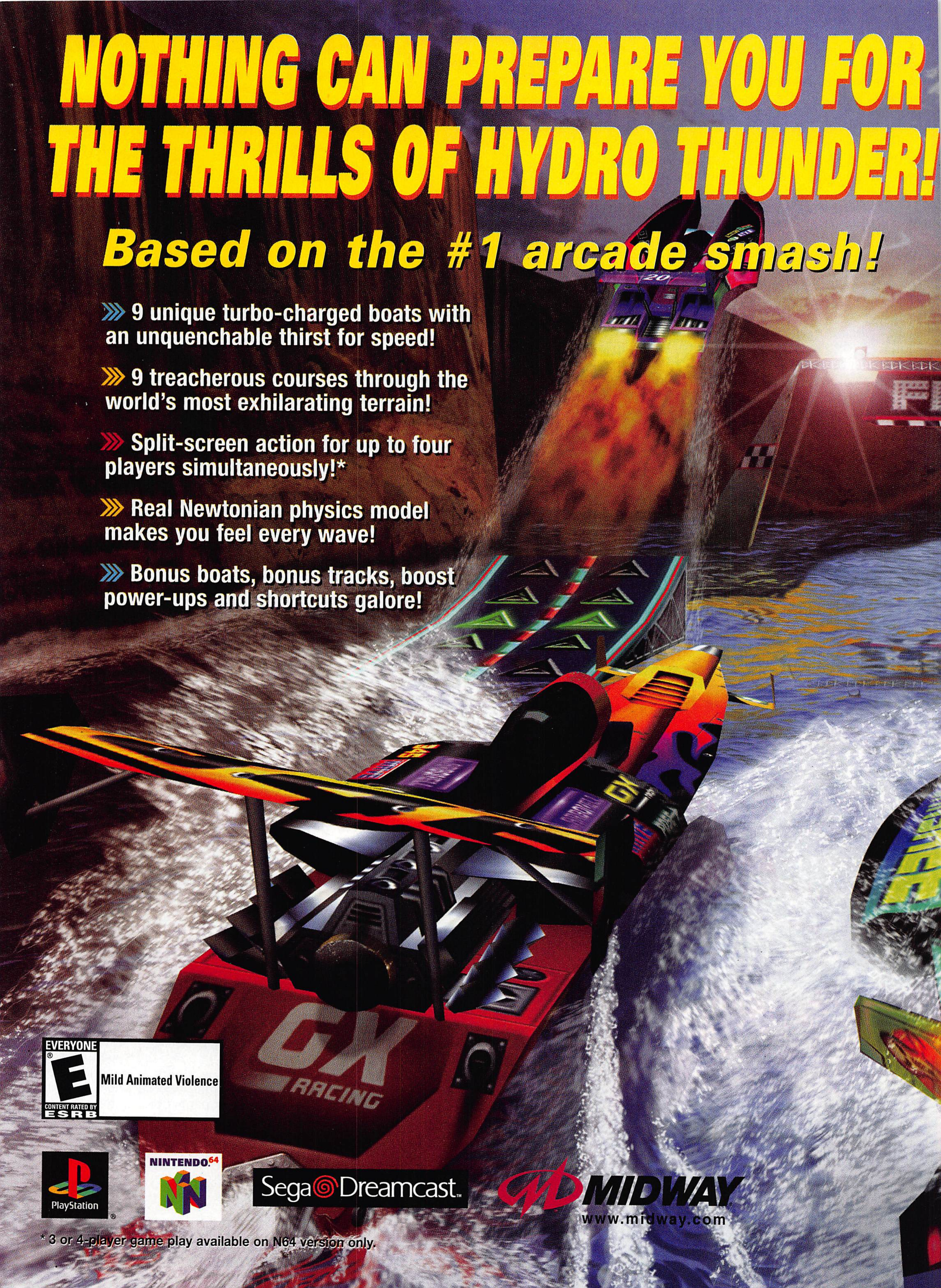
If, however, what you're looking for is a hi-res version of *Gran Turismo*, you've hit pay dirt. The only other person in the office that got to play *Sega GT* was Kodomo, and that guy was a *GT* freak. However, even he had to admit that *Sega GT* left something to be desired—even he was expecting something a bit more innovative. Still, the game isn't done yet, and perhaps there's still time for some of that Sega-brand magic to work its way into the gas tank...

So if you're still riding the Hype Express, now might be a good time to debark. After all, there's nothing worse than getting caught with your pants down and having to continue to lie to yourself that this game's really going to redefine the racing genre. But if a new chapter in the *Gran Turismo* saga's what you're looking for, then toss those pants, and get ready for the time of your life. **ECM**



DEVELOPER - SEGA	1 PLAYER	ECM: SEGA	P PREVIEW
PUBLISHER - SEGA	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	GRAN TURISMO	



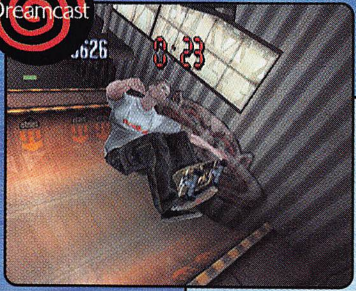
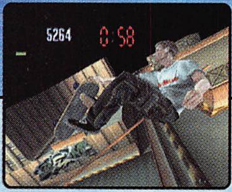

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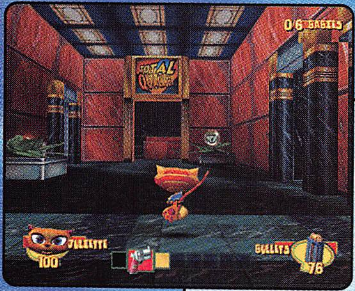
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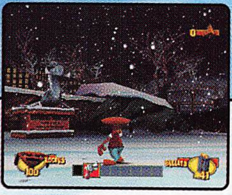
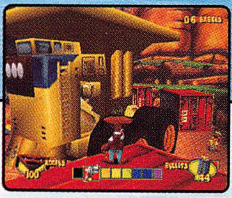
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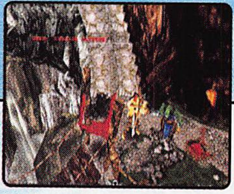



Tony Hawk Pro Skater (Crave) — Our favorite grind session (oops, did I say that?) is shaping up nicely on the DC. It's pretty much a straight port, except for the insane four-player mode...



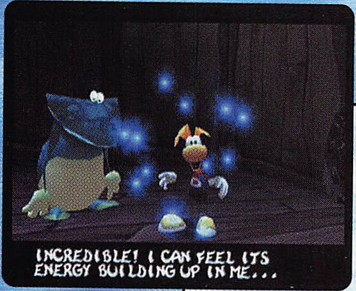



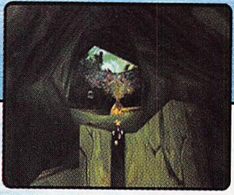

Fur Fighters (Acclaim) — Cute, furry woodland creatures aren't well represented on Sega's 128-bit powerhouse. Acclaim will change all that, though, with cool characters and stellar gameplay...




Gauntlet (Midway) — Elf needs food badly—and for everyone that's been looking for an arcade-perfect port, this should be it. No tap needed for four-player mode? I'm there!







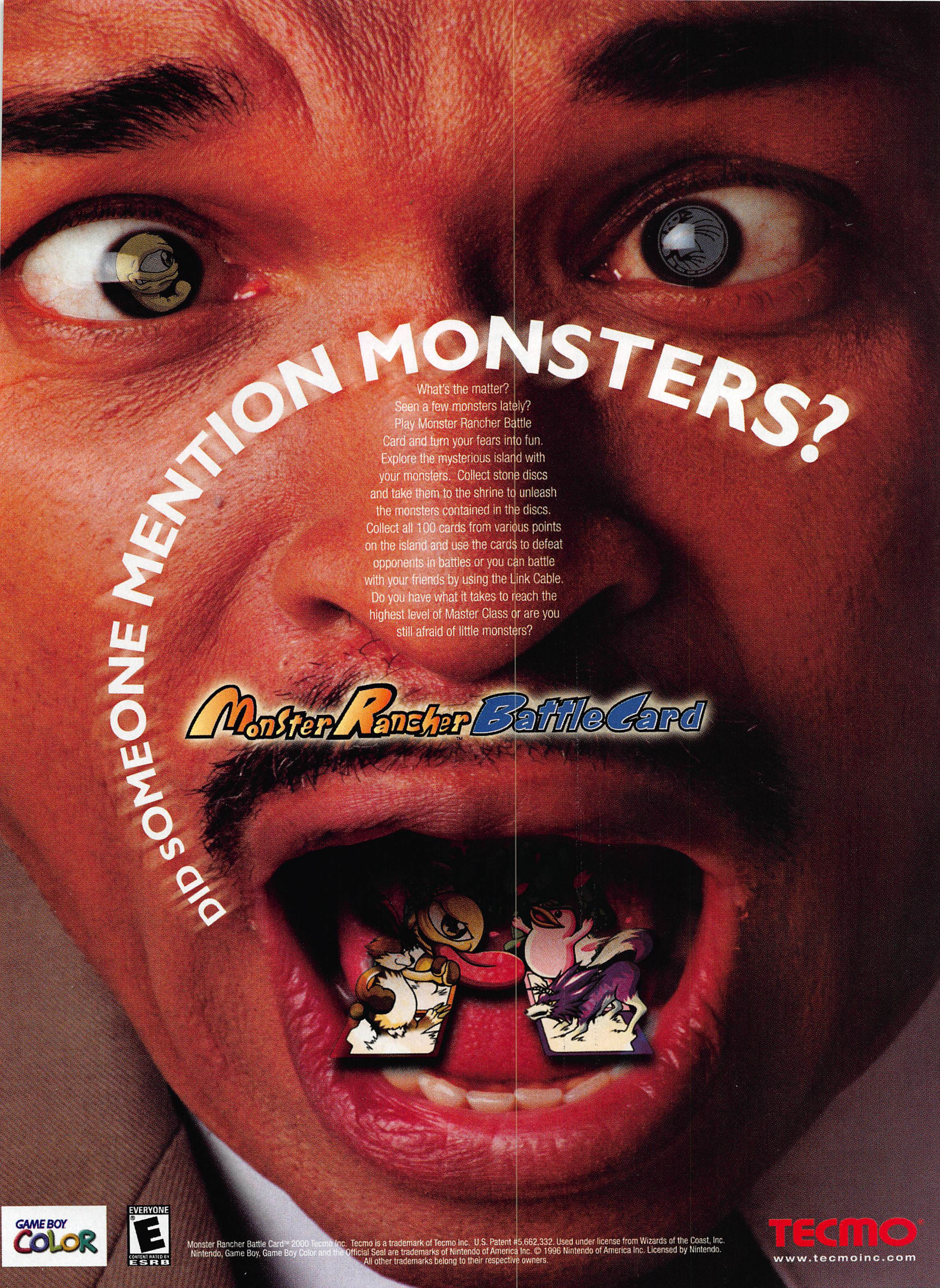

Rayman 2 (Ubisoft) — Look, Ma, no hands, again! What the N64 version lacked is sure to be remedied in this juiced-up port of *Rayman 2*...







Time Stalkers (Sega) — It's been a long time coming, but the wave of RPGs is upon us. Start 2000 off right with one of the best.


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After a short hiatus indoors, avoiding all the storms that whipped through Europe in December, Riot's back with another edition of Europa, and it's time to talk about N-Gen—one of Infogrames' last big PlayStation games to be released this year. What makes this game exciting is the team behind it: the Curly Monsters. This outfit's made up of some of Psygnosis' finest talent, including Nick Burcombe, the mastermind behind the first two *Wipeout* games.

N-Gen and Curly Monsters

Ever since I learned of the Curly Monsters' inception, I've been trying to dig up information on what the team's been doing with those nice blue PlayStation dev. kits of theirs. I even sunk to new lows when I was visiting fellow Liverpool developers Bizarre Creations (*Metropolis Street Racer* for Easter!). I tried bribing them in hopes of getting some information on what their friends at Curly Monsters were doing... needless to say, that scheme didn't work.





You have to understand that *Wipeout* changed the way I viewed all European console games (namely, I stopped hating them), so anything the creators of that seminal piece of game design are working on is of great interest to me... Well, anything except Burcombe's last *Psygnosis* game, *Psybadek*, which is best forgotten (try *Trickstyle* instead if you want hoverboarding action).

The gleam of the Pulitzer was still beaming in front of my eyes, so I didn't give up my efforts to dig up some dirt on *N-Gen*, the Curly Monsters' first game. Globe-conquering Infogrames was smart enough to snap this baby up for release across Europe in the early summer.

Those who read GF Online know a thing or two about my fixation with *N-Gen*. It started in early 1999, when rumors finally started to leak out on what the former Psygnosis team was working on. Surely they wouldn't stray too far from the genre they know so well, futuristic racing?!? Then again, it was definitely time to create something new, so what do you do? That's easy—take the best (i.e., fastest) bits from *Wipeout*, add lots more speed, and put in heavily-armed fighter planes flying at extremely low altitudes, blowing stuff up, and fashionably call it *N-Gen*.

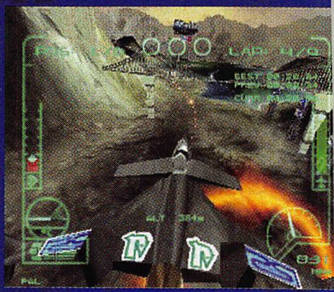
Besides speed, another thing that *N-Gen* will share with *Wipeout* is the Designers' Republic-inspired design. When it comes to team logos, menus, and trackside textures, we're talking innovation and style like Namco. The color scheme used in the game's a mixture of green and bluish colors, which work really well in giving the game a look all its own. Of course, a lot of work's still being done with the design... a local design agency's helping the team come up with the visuals.

So what makes this game different from the countless other PlayStation racing games (besides your fighter plane, I hear you asking)? Well, the interaction between plane and player, for one thing. There are two different control methods available, depending on your preferences. The average joe can go for the Arcade-style method; this mode will deliver a very *Ridge Racer*-like experience, with simple con-



trols. But if you really want to go for the next level in jet fighter flying, choose Simulation mode. Here, the controls are a lot more sensitive and responsive, giving you complete control over your plane of choice—which basically means you get to go faster... as long as you stay in the air. Don't fret, though; even in Simulation mode, we're not talking about Micro Prose levels of realism... If we were, we couldn't possibly be talking about fun gameplay.

Curly Monsters acknowledges the masterful design of Polyphony Digital's finest hour—*Gran Turismo*—and are basing their own game's main mode (the N-Ge league) after *GT*'s Turismo mod which means you need to w races to obtain money to upgrad planes. When you have the cas it's possible to buy a complete new plane. There are over fort





different models; some are rea some imaginary, and some ar based on planes currently rumore to be in production... Shady rep resentatives of the various manu facturing countries actually sell th planes, which is a nice touch.

I hate flight sims with a passion about the only reason I even tr them out on the PC is to check ou how the ground detail is, and if th cities look any good. Usually, yo either have hyper-detailed graphics and absolutely no sense of speed



or you get fast action over completely flat landscapes... boring Most of the time in a flight sim's spent at extremely low altitudes, so creating detailed and interesting landscapes is of paramount importance. The undulating landscapes of *N-Gen* are littered with detail, and the course you're supposed to follow is conveniently marked by red blinking lights—just like the ones you see on airport runways. Fail to follow the course, and you're automatically dragged back to the track; you can't deviate much from the racing line.

N-Gen races take place over fourteen different levels, and the

wer you fly, the faster you go. it 1000 meters, though, and the ane'll stall. Avoid your competitors if you can, though; they'll y to damage your plane with issiles and cannon fire, so if eed be, drop back, blast 'em ith some missiles, then put ome ventilation holes into their ulls, just for fun.

N-Gen was originally set for a larch release, but has been ostponed until May, possibly for big E3 release. That gives the eam more than enough time to ork out any hiccups currently ound in the game. Time will tell Curly Monsters will become a orce to be reckoned with, or nother offshoot team that gets ost in the shuffle (*Eighth Wonder*, when is that game coming out again?)—I'm betting firmy on that first option.

Managing Director Andy Satterthwaite (producer of *Wipeout 2097* and *Colony Wars*) ook time out from his busy chedule to answer a few quesions about *N-Gen* and the Curly Monsters in general:

GF: Was it difficult to leave Psygnosis and form your own eam?

AS: Well, we deliberated over it or a long time, but when we actually made the commitment to each other, it wasn't that hard. The difficult bit was getting a studio set up quickly so we could get on with the ob... In the end, it was about a month after we'd left before we could actually start work.

GF: What did you think of Wip3out?

AS: They seem to have done an alright job—it certainly looks good. But they really didn't push the idea much further, and I'm not sure if that's acceptable for a second sequel. However, we've only played the demo version, so I don't think it's fair to really comment.

GF: How did you come up with the idea for Jet:X/N-Gen?

AS: The idea of flying jet fighters really close to the ground in an ultra-fast race just sounded like a good one. We knew we wanted to do a racing game, we knew we wanted it to be fast, and we also wanted to do something a little bit different from everything else out there—the rest of the ideas just evolved from there.

GF: What kind of research has been done for the various fighter planes? Are they all real-life planes, or have you created some?

AS: We spent quite a bit of time in the beginning, researching the different planes, which are all real-life ones, to make sure that we knew how they were supposed to fly. But *N-Gen* was never supposed to be a flight simulator, so we've taken that information and turned it into plane handling that's representative but primarily fun (as opposed to completely accurate but far too difficult or boring).

GF: Can you give us a run-down on the gameplay and the different modes of play?

AS: Handling modes aside, there are two main game modes: Arcade and N-Gen. Arcade's designed for people who just want a quick game; they can pick from a small selection of aircraft and race without having to worry about earning enough money to buy the planes, etc. Also, our Two Player modes are available in Arcade—these are either Head-to-Head for racing fans, or the intriguing Chase mode for those who want a more combat-oriented experience.

In N-Gen mode (which is single-player only), the gameplay follows *GT*-style lines. The player has to obtain race permits, buy aircraft, then race them in single races or championships to earn money to upgrade those aircraft, or buy new ones—to enter more races and earn more money. Besides racing, N-Gen also offers Time Trial, Free Flight and Majic-12 (timed challenges) options to further extend the game. There are four different classes of aircraft (and hence, races), ranging from the slow, simple, and weapon-free Trainer class to the ultra quick X-Fighters.

GF: Is striking the right balance between arcade and simulation difficult?

AS: It has certainly taken a lot of work, and a lot of iterations and experimentation. The key difficulty is providing something easy enough for a novice to play, whilst providing enough depth for the hard-core—this is why there are so many game modes and why we have provided two different handling modes.

GF: Why the change from Jet:X to N-Gen?

AS: This was primarily a marketing decision; apparently, there were a number of alternative interpretations of *Jet:X* in other countries ("X" representing adult content, "Jet" representing jet bikes rather than jet aircraft)... *N-Gen Racing*, to give its full title, represents the game more completely—it says it's Next-Generation, it says it's racing, and it seems to be acceptable internationally.

GF: Considering how much the music helped the "feel" of *Wipeout*, are you trying to secure some big-name artists to contribute to N-Gen's soundtrack?

AS: Yes, we are working on this, but it's still not 100% confirmed.

GF: Curly Monsters is a small team... will you be expanding in the future?

AS: We will expand somewhat, but we intend to stay small and focused on quality. Having a small team this time has been a help, rather than a hindrance—we would hate to make the same mistake that others have of expanding to huge proportions, with huge costs, and then not be able to deliver the quality through poor communication and a lack of direction.

GF: Will Curly Monsters support the PS2, and do you think developers will still be supporting the Dreamcast when the PS2 comes out?

AS: Curly Monsters will certainly be supporting the PlayStation2. As for the Dreamcast, that's up to the developers who are supporting it—but it's sold over a million units in the U.S. so I'm sure some will stick with it.

GF: Does Curly Monsters think that 2D graphics and 2D-based games still have a chance on the market?

AS: Yes, they have a chance, if the game requires them... 2D *Tetris* is much better than 3D Tetris, for example... And 2D games are certainly very viable on handheld consoles. But I think 2D games are going to become less and less common, because unless you do happen to get lucky with a fantastic idea, you're going to sell fewer units than a similarly rated 3D game.

Thanks to Andy and Nick at Curly Monsters.

Sizzlin' Euro News

The Australian Dreamcast launch might have been a debacle of "Wild Wild West" proportions (no machines, no games, and no Internet connection, though it was clearly advertised on the package), but in Europe, Sega's having great success, despite the current drought of triple-A games. What you might not know is that currently, only Dreamcast owners in England, Spain, France, and Germany can access the Internet; the rest of Europe has to wait at least until summer just to get online. At least there are a few great titles in the coming months to ease the pain... *Crazy Taxi* comes out February 25th, with *NBA 2K* following in March, and if all goes as planned, Bizarre Creations' duo of *Fur Fighters* and the long-awaited *Metropolis Street Racer* should be hitting the stores.

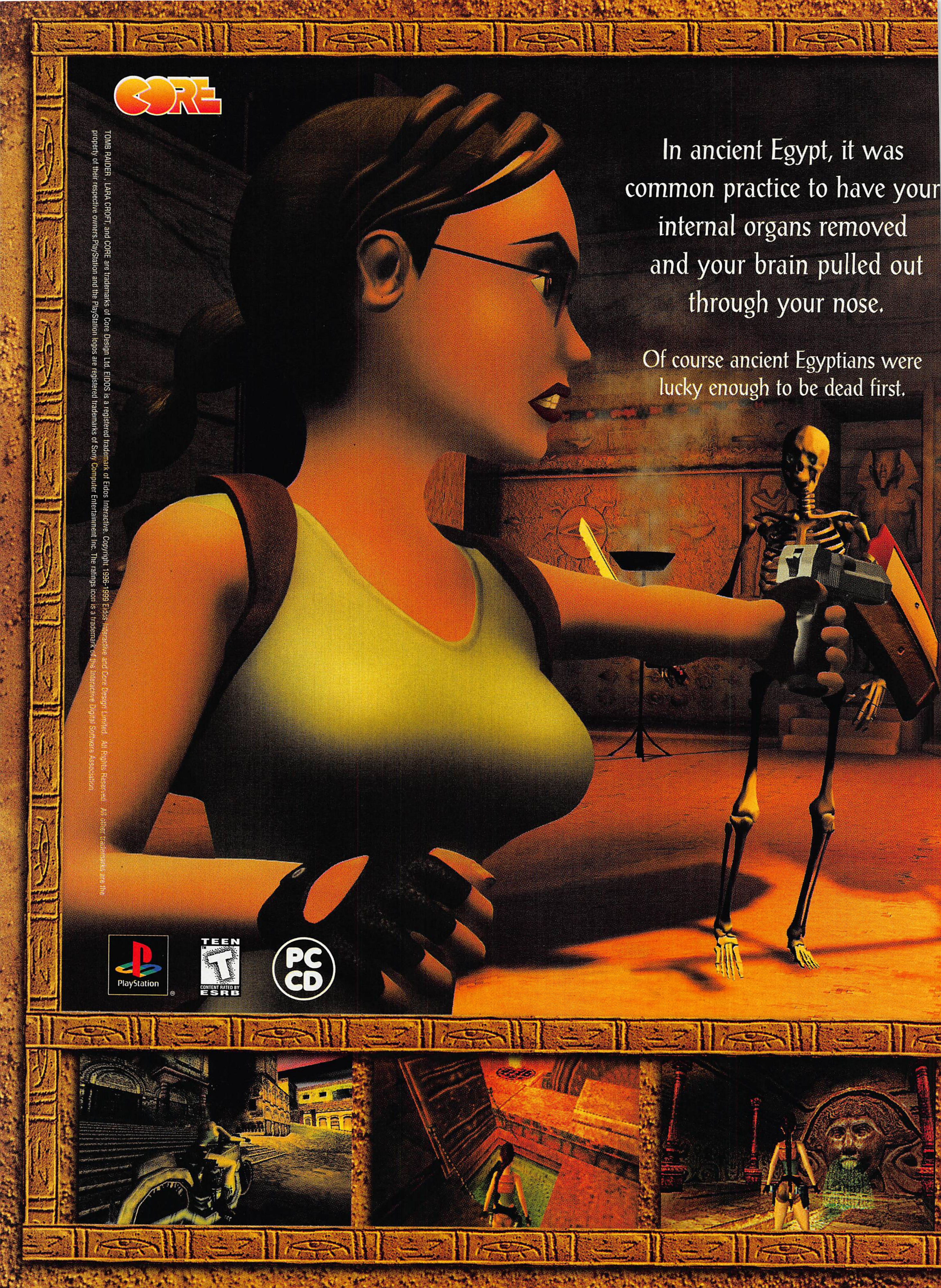
Medievil 2

In Sony Land, *Medievil 2*'s nearing completion for an April release across Europe. The original game's notched up sales of over 80,000 units (despite an extremely disappointing U.K. debut—the word brick comes to mind), so there's definitely an audience for the sequel. Hero Dan Fortesque's called back into action for the sequel, as Lord Zarok's spell book falls into the hands of a certain shady individual known as Lord Palethorne. Palethorne tries to resurrect himself an army of the undead-soldier kind. Luckily, the spell wakes Sir Dan from his eternal rest, and it's up to you to stop his minions, and, ultimately, the evil one himself. *Medievil 2* takes place 500 years after the first game, so the setting's very Victorian—which gives the designers a chance to flex their artistic muscle with cool London-based levels. Expect improved visuals in the same gothic style, along with new game mechanics—Dan can now control his hand remotely!

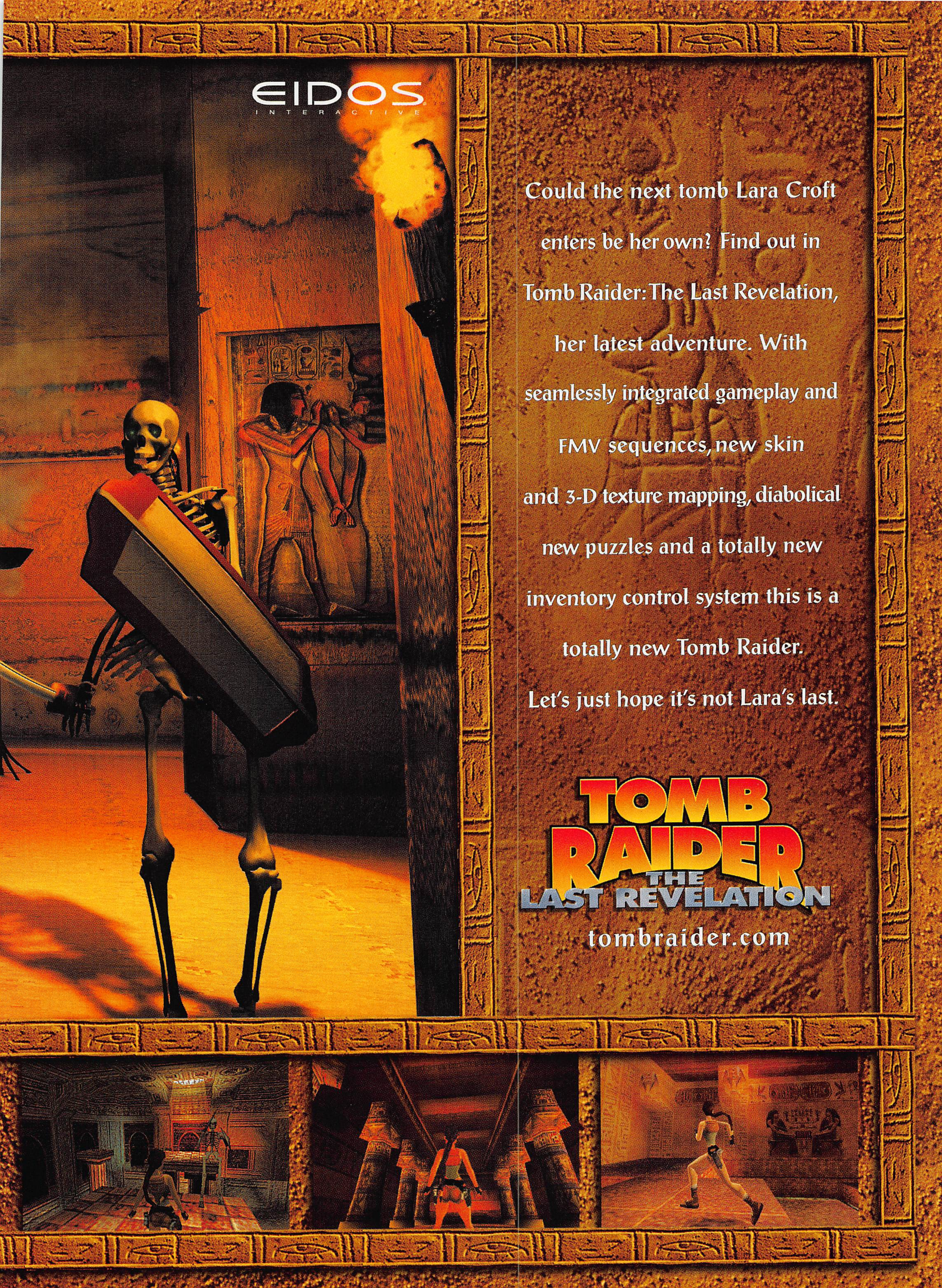
In Cold Blood

I would've thought, after all of Charles Cecil's lovely comments on the PlayStation 2, that Revolution would be the last developer to work on a state-of-the-art game for the current PlayStation—but that's exactly what they're doing with *In Cold Blood*. Revolution isn't one that deviates too much from its adventure-game roots; *In Cold Blood* is an action/adventure title with some fashionable stealthy gameplay bits. You assume the role of John Cord, an MI6 special agent in the near future, sent on a mission to a small republic of the old U.S.S.R. Upon John's arrival, all goes wrong, and the plot unfolds in nine distinct missions. According to the superlative-laden press release, the story line (written by professional scriptwriters) will reportedly shed light on Cord's past and offer plenty of surprises.

At the moment, *In Cold Blood*'s style is a dark one in the vein of *Resident Evil*, with highly detailed, rendered backgrounds—but there's some fancy technical stuff here, too, like realistic shadows and lighting, and very smooth-skinned characters animated to the Nth level. *In Cold Blood* will be released in Europe in the spring, with a U.S. release to follow.



CORE
In ancient Egypt, it was common practice to have your internal organs removed and your brain pulled out through your nose.
Of course ancient Egyptians were lucky enough to be dead first.
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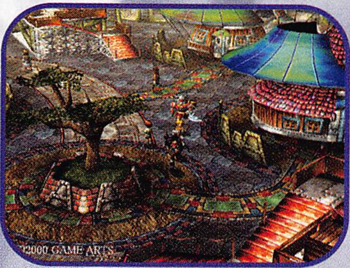
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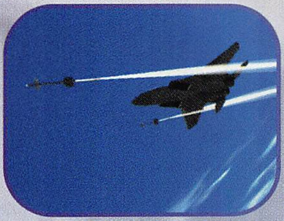

Judging from the latest shots of *Grandia 2* for Dreamcast, perhaps GameArts should have named it *2 Grandia*. On a system that isn't known for RPGs, this game just might be a godsend. The story will take place 10,000 years after God and Satan duke it out, leaving massive scars on the world. An interesting plot, but when you've got shots that look like this, who cares about plot? Expect the game to hit Japan in the summer of this year.









Aero Dancing F (Dreamcast)

I gotta tell ya: Reubus, our resident nagging Art Director (*"Where's my text, you slacker monkeys!?"*), began his own little Aero Dance after seeing these shots. "A more combat-heavy *Aero-Dancing*? I'm soooo there!"











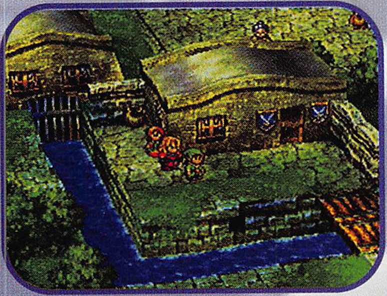


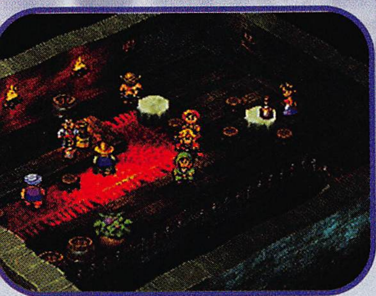
Dragon Quest 7 (PlayStation)

There's good news and bad news about Enix's *Dragon Quest 7: Warriors of Eden*. The good news is, well just look at this latest batch of shots. Prepare for an amazing RPG experience that will push your PS to the limit. The bad news is that you'll probably have your hands on a PS2 before *DQ7*. The game has now officially been delayed until 'early May', so that the quality of the game can live up to Enix's standard. A bold statement, but consider that Square has delayed the release of *Final Fantasy IX* to avoid release near *DQ7*, and you'll get an idea of the serious pull this game has in Japan.








Imports

Reviews





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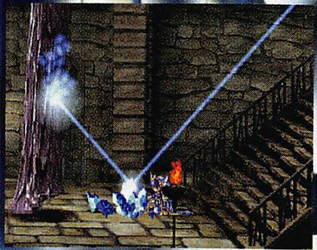


One of the worst parts of being a game critic is having high expectations for a title... and ultimately being disappointed by it. Such was the case when I pulled up the profile on Enix's latest—an action/RPG with a compelling story based on Norse mythology, tear-inducing 2D graphics, and, most importantly, developer Tri-Ace at the helm. I'd been looking forward to this game for over six months, since screens first started popping up in Japanese magazines. You may remember Tri-Ace as the creators of *Star Ocean 2*; sadly, I spent more time in the Star Ocean than in the Pacific Ocean last summer... <wince>.

Anyway, *Valkyrie Profile* puts you on the wings of a Valkyrie—Goddess of War. Your mission: Scour the land for fresh souls of the newly departed. Once you've found a dead warrior's soul, you can either claim it as a member of your party or send it up to Valhalla, where the gods are doing battle; throughout the game, you'll be transporting artifacts and souls to Valhalla to help your cause. As far as RPGs go, this is one of the most refreshing and interesting stories I've read in a long, long time. But realize that this game is filled with death and mourning; it's a very solemn atmosphere, so if you prefer more upbeat or festive RPGs like *Grandia* or *Lunar: SSSC*, you'll want to look elsewhere.

Oddly enough, the music completely contradicts the gloomy theme; the songs are well composed, lively, and inspirational—'pick yourself up off the ground and fight'-type anthems. They're an unlikely mix when put to a story about the Norse Grim Reaper, but I have to say the decision to go with 'happy music' was probably best... depressing songs would've been too much (thirty hours of melancholy sound and story, and you'd probably want to visit Valhalla yourself...).

There are two halves to the game: the story development sequences, and the dungeons. The story unfolds as you fly around the land, listening for the cries of the









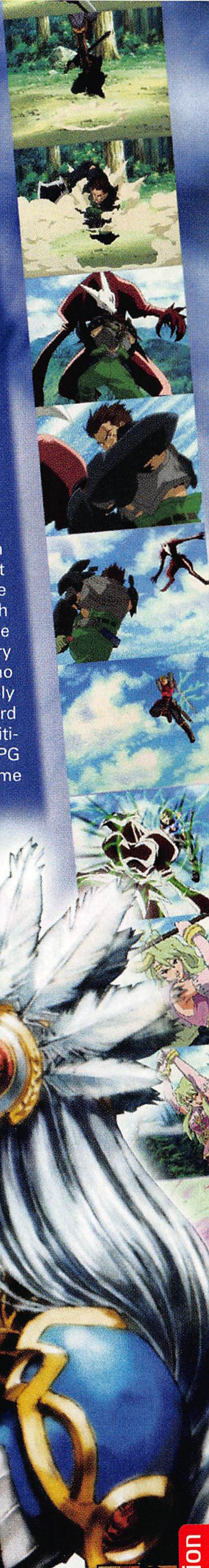












dead. Once you've found a soul, visit the town, hear their life story (or, rather, the end of it), and collect the soul. You can visit any of the other towns in the world whenever you'd like; talking to each of the townspeople brings up a humongous character portrait. I've never seen characters' faces this large—we're talking gorgeous, hand-drawn caricatures that fill a full third of the screen. There are some repeats among the common townsfolk, but for the most part, they're all unique (quite a feat, considering how many characters there are in all the towns). Wandering the streets reminded me a lot of *Pirates Gold!*... <Blatant plug: "Are The Judge and I the only ones to realize the greatness of this Genesis classic? Why are we getting remakes of nearly every other game **except** *Pirates*? Sid, do us a favor and release an update to *Pirates* with 128-bit mayor's daughters!">

The other half of the game involves exploring dungeons, in search of treasures you can send to Valhalla. This portion of the game took me completely by surprise. It's somewhat reminiscent of *Actraiser's* adventure/platforming sequences. Enemies inhabit the dungeons, and contact with them will lead you into combat on a standard RPG battlefield. But while the fighting is turn-based and standard looking, the play mechanics are not. Each of the four main PS buttons is linked by Norse magic to a single character in your party. Every button pressed sends the corresponding character into his/her attack. So with four quick button presses, you can send your whole party out to do a massive team combo in seconds (like *Tales of Destiny*, minus the skill).

This is my big gripe with *Valkyrie Profile*: the gameplay. Neither the *Actraiser* portion nor the battles are any fun. The jumping's occasionally marred by horrendous slow-down, which makes getting all the chests (as ninja gamers are wont to do) even more stressful. Battles are laughably easy in the normal mode. Just perform a group combo involving all your characters, and you've won. Not to mention the extra hits you're allowed to tack onto each character's combo... go nuts, swing for an extra 10 hits, then do the same with someone else (and it's all a combo). Do this with every character, and you'll be plowing through enemies (even bosses) in no time. On the off chance your party's annihilated, the game simply boots you out of the dungeon to start again—instead of the standard "Game Over" screen, like a regular RPG. Perhaps I'm being a bit critical here, but I just came off playing *Legend of Dragoon*—a great RPG that was incredibly difficult—and comparatively, *VP* just leaves me wanting more in the gameplay department.





The developers have thrown in a few extra features, such as difficulty settings (easy, medium, and difficult) and item creation... but neither of these makes up for the lack of enjoyable gameplay. I felt like I was just going through the motions, instead of having a good time. It's a shame, too, because the game boasts great graphics (the best 2D you'll ever see on PlayStation, with multiple layers of parallax!), rousing music, plenty of voiceovers, and a gripping story. But it falls far short in the most important area—fun.

SCEA's had a history of publishing Enix's games over here, but chances are, Enix will publish *Valkyrie Profile* itself. The company's currently opening a North American office, and this would be a great introductory title for the budding U.S. publisher. So if you prefer playing your games in English, wait till the second half of the year; there's no rush to cross the pricey import waters for this one.

Eggo checked Vegas for the latest line on Dragon Quest VII *coming out in March and came back crying.*







Viewpoint Score	Developer / Publisher	Players / Availability	Eggo
:84	Developer - Tri-Ace	1 Player	Eggo: Valkyrie
	Publisher - Enix	Available Now Japan	is about to die.

R Review













Chocobo De Dice

Chocobo De Dice... Due to ugly space constraints, this'll be the "Cliff's Notes" review. *CDD*'s a combination of board games *Monopoly* and *Risk*... Picture a board with a path of squares (similar to properties in *Monopoly*), shops, and crystals; the ultimate goal is to earn a set amount of money before anyone else does. To do that, you'll have to circle the board, collect crystals, and pass 'Go' to get paid. If you land on an unoccupied property, you can leave a monster behind to guard it. Now, assume an opponent lands on your occupied square; he must pay the cost of rent immediately. But if he has the resources and monsters available, he can pay to boot your monster out, permanently—and replace it with one of his. The catch is, he'll have to pay double the 'rent' to evict you (or *triple* the price to gain control of someone else's property). And, as in *Risk*, if you control all properties of a single region on a turn, additional money's rewarded.

Of course, there's more to it than just '*Monopoly* with a corporate buyout clause' (look, Ma—hostile takeovers!)... What Square game would be complete without the lovable, cute-sified cast of *Final Fantasy*? Everything from the crystals to the Goblins to Chocobo... it'll all be familiar to fans of Chocobo's previous games. Plus, there are magic spells ("Frog" is just plain EVIL!) and a four-player mode. I had a blast playing *Chocobo De Dice*, and fans of Square and board games in general should love it too.







Chocobo Stallion

Did you spend countless hours breeding Chocobos and racing them in *Final Fantasy VII*? Then *Chocobo Stallion* might be right up your alley. *CS* is much more than the *FFVII* mini-game; it's a full-on Chocobo racing/breeding game, similar to Tecmo's *Gallop Racer*. Breed generations of Chocobos, bet on races, and raise your ranch to prominence. I sausaged out with the Golden Saucer Chocobo races in *FFVII* (won every prize and repeatedly stomped the black rider), but *Chocobo Stallion*'s a little too in-depth for me. You'll need a very solid grasp of the Japanese language to play. *Chocobo De Dice* and *Chocobo Racing* are games you can pick up and play immediately, but *Chocobo Stallion* is a much greater time hog. You can't really pick it up and have fun right away—it's more involved, and takes some getting into (plus, you need to have the right personality, one that's fascinated with horses/Chocobos circling a track).





Let's just hope Square EA decides to bring *Chocobo Collection* to the U.S. (hey, if you're gonna bring *Bushido Blade 2* and *Front Mission 3* here, why not this?)—as long as they don't cut it like they did the *Final Fantasy Anthology/Collection*!







Chocobo Racing

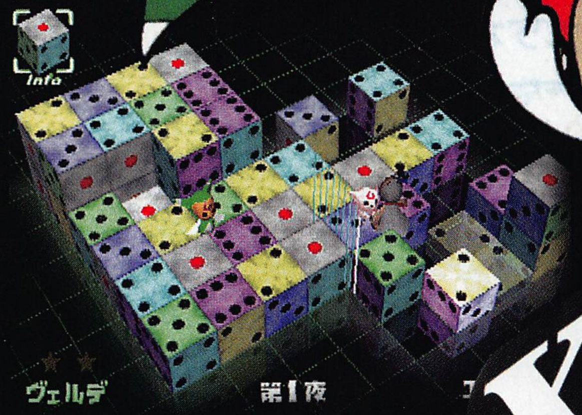
Chocobo Racing (*Mario Kart* with a Square twist) is the third disc in *Chocobo Collection*; in case you were wondering, this is the same game you can purchase on domestic shelves right now. It's an amusing diversion that'll last a few days for truly hard-core Square fans, since it takes that long to unlock all the hidden racers.

Eggo's grateful that the two 'Dungeon' games didn't make it into the Collection.



R REVIEW — EGGO: GOTTA CHOKE 'EM ALL.	DEVELOPER - SQUARESOFT	1-4 PLAYERS	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 81
	PUBLISHER - SQUARESOFT	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	







Few people seemed to care, judging by the poor sales figures, but last year's *Xi* (dubbed *Devil Dice* Stateside) was one of the best games ever on the PlayStation. It was a truly original puzzle game—an excellent brain buster, with some of the best gameplay seen on the system. *Xi* was more challenging than *Intelligent Cube,* more addictive than *Tetris*, and better looking than *Baku Baku.* Even Reubus loved it, and he usually hates puzzle games.

I have no idea how much money THQ ponied up to get the rights to *Xi*'s domestic release, but whatever they paid, I doubt they made any of it back. Alas, this spelled almost certain doom for any sequel by an American publisher. We had our chance to take advantage of *Xi*, and we fumbled the ball—proving once again that we Americans, as consumers, are idiots (not that that should come as any surprise). That's all I have to say—I'll leave my Dennis Miller rant on the tastes of American youth for another time...

Now, the first title was so close to perfection and so brilliantly self-contained that I failed to see where they could possibly have taken it without mucking up the gameplay (and, in effect, the essence of the game). But shockingly, the sequel is in fact a better game. Its developers teetered awhile on the verge of screwing it up, adding more gameplay options and modes, yet they managed to stay on the near side of meddlesome, and produced an even better game.





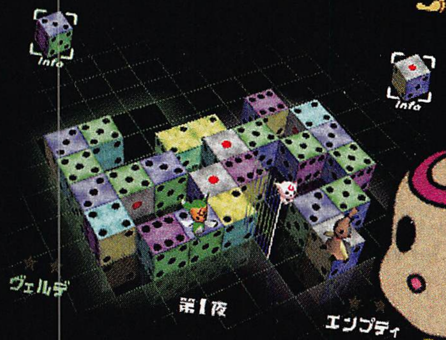
XI [sái] JUMBO



The same refined gameplay and strategy of the first *Xi* return for the sequel: Roll the dice, match the numbers, and eliminate connecting dice. Score points by creating larger chains, and avoid filling up the whole board. But in addition to rolling and pushing the dice, you can now hop them, as well as stack them. These new actions add a whole new wrinkle to the strategy—they make formerly complex tasks possible, and cause even greater chaos to break out.

Xi 2's additional modes are also welcome. Go head-to-head with friends, meander in free play, go for the time attack, or take on a series of challenging goals as determined by the computer. I found this to be the most enjoyable mode. Its tasks range from earning a set number of points to generating long chain reactions—all in a certain amount of time. Fail to complete the task, and the game penalizes you (i.e., slaps you with a harder task or a faster spawn). "Frenetic" is the only way to describe it, and even the most seasoned player will find himself sweating out these levels.

Xi 2 is another brilliant title that just begs to be played. Sadly, its chances of a domestic release are very slim, so I suggest you grab yourself an import copy as soon as you can... It may be the last great PlayStation game you buy. J

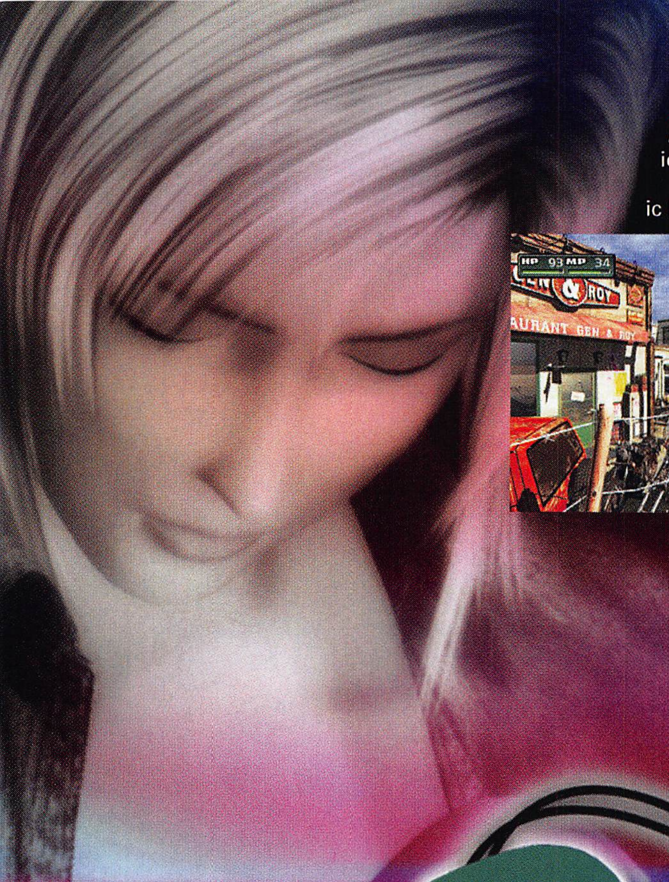




Viewpoint Score: 96	Developer - SCEI	1-2 Players	The Judge: Now if
	Publisher - SCEI	Available Now Japan	only some were fuzzy...

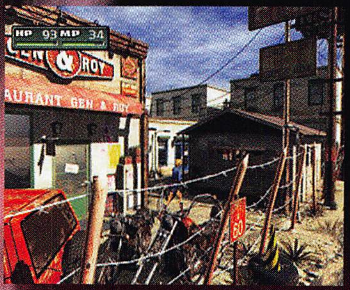
R Review





Here's my executive key to the *Parasite Eve* washroom… beating the Chrysler Building in the EX game, only to come to an ending which was not at all worth it. Ugh—I still have flashbacks of those seventy-seven glossy floors of pain. Still, considering all that time spent playing it, *Parasite Eve* was easily one of my favorite games of '98. So you can imagine how anxious I was to see the sequel…

Aieee! What happened here? The first *Parasite Eve* was the first "cinematic RPG," and a truly unique game. But now it seems that Square is paying homage to Capcom, taking this formerly original title and forcing it through the 'survival horror' cookie cutter just to fit in with all the rest.



O.K., *PE2* does retain some aspects which set it apart from the rest of its survival horror ilk; weapon customization is still in effect, and armor now has pockets which restrict the number of items you can bring into a fight. The CG is still divine (I'm convinced those artists have signed an unnatural pact with the CG gods—those movies keep getting better), and there's no shortage of it (unlike the competition). Yes, *PE2* is still a cinematic RPG… For some, that's not good—but I am not one of those doomsday fanatics who thinks the world will end if story sequences are told through pretty movies instead of in-game graphics. The magic system has also been retooled: Spells now fall into elemental categories (fire, water, earth, air), and choosing which ones to level up is left to the player.



Yet, despite all these advances, *Parasite Eve 2* is not perfect, or entirely original… As I mentioned earlier, the game's taken more than one cue from



Resident Evil. The most disappointing is the adoption of *RE*'s control scheme, which has always been cumbersome (i.e., "forward" is the gas, "back" is reverse, "left" and "right" rotate you about the imaginary Mikami axis). *Parasite Eve*'s control was much better; now, Aya controls like a tank, not a cop in a tank top, and while Claire and Jill have learned that quick 180-degree spin move, Aya hasn't kept up with the latest in survival horror… She suffers from 'Rotation Sickness Death' in combat (keep in mind that you're constantly running around setting up the next shot). In Aya's defense, she can walk while shooting (ahh, shades of *Silent Hill*); after all, nothing beats mulching monsters while backing into a corner. All right, she can't exactly walk and shoot at the same time, but she can back up with her weapon drawn. Other nods to *Resident Evil* include health sprays, single-room multiple camera angles, and the sudden





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PlayStation



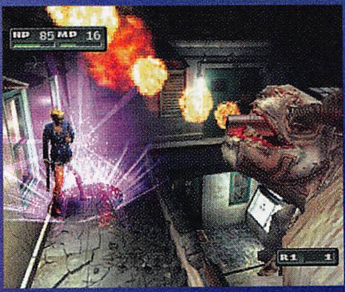
R REVIEW	EGGO: RESIDENT EVE 2?	DEVELOPER - SQUARESOFT PUBLISHER - SQUARESOFT	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	VIEWPOINT SCORE :84

pounces of 'surprising' monsters. Thankfully, the classic 'door opening' loading scenes were left by the wayside <collective sigh of relief>...

On the bright side, the battles in *PE2* are more challenging than *PE1*, and more fun than *Resident Evil*. It requires more strategy, as its battles aren't always fought in wide-open spaces; they force you to use the terrain to your advantage. Say the location is a supermarket... Back yourself down an aisle, bottleneck the monsters at the head of it, and plug away from afar! Until they start jumping over the shelves, of course.







Granted, *Parasite Eve* had the occasional corner to hide behind—but they were few and far between, compared to *PE2*'s myriad beams, crates, poles, etc. Compared to *Resident Evil*, *Parasite Eve*'s enemies are much smarter and faster ("your enemies are obsolete"). There are no lethargic, moaning zombies shambling about in this game, oh no; you've got to deal with swarms of blinding bats, dashing dogs, and hopping I-don't-know-whats. The enemy character design is pretty good (check out that flame-spitting, two-story monstrosity in the screen shots), and those unhappy mitochondria have mutated into some interesting additions to Bob's Traveling Freak Show.

There's one thing that *PE* had which *PE2* doesn't: a flair for the cinematic—i.e., jets screaming through the streets of New York, a multi-story, car-crushing monster, a mass of screaming, burning bodies falling from the balcony at Carnegie Hall, the rooftop explosion, Eve flying headlong into the camera... That feeling of Hollywood spectacle isn't here in *PE2*; instead, it just feels like you're playing another *Resident Evil*, and some people may be fine with that, but I was looking for a little bit more.



I also have minor gripes with the occasional poor battle camera angle; sure, there's an aim auto-lock, but when you're firing blindly at a target off-screen, an unseen object can get in the way. And despite its multiple endings, *Parasite Eve 2* is short—it falls in the '10 hours to complete' category—if you're an adventurer concerned about length, though there is some replay value in the multiple endings. Square EA hasn't yet mentioned a date for a U.S. release, but considering the *PE2* teaser first aired at E3 last year, it's a safe bet that the game will be coming Stateside soon... and with a fair share of gaijin import-buying, password-entering protection, I recommend you wait for it.





Eggo doesn't fawn over video game females like Dangohead, but if he did, Aya would be a prime candidate... too bad she's got 'issues' with her past.

e eve 2]



RAINBOW COTTON













There's nothing worse than witnessing the death of something you love... For some, it was the release of "Star Wars: Episode One," heralding the end of 'hard-core Star Wars.' For others, it was the cheesed-out, super-weak 'new Metallica;' and for me, it's what's become of the *Cotton* series of shooters and its latest stomach-churning DC misadventure...

The original *Cotton* (a solid arcade shooter from the golden age of arcade games) spawned sequel after sequel on the SNES, Mega Drive, and PC Engine in Japan. Essentially, they were all the same game, with an enhancement or tweak here and there (e.g., beefed-up music on the PCE CD rev). The *Duo* edition was the only one to make it out on this side of the Pacific... In it, you assumed the role of Cotton, our favorite little witch, rode her broomstick, and delivered death to all that sought to crush her happy-go-lucky homeland (no boos from the *Magical Chase* contingent, please). It was a great little game, with a nice cartoon-y twist; yet not until the Saturn rev of *Cotton 2* (and its pseudo-sequel/update *Cotton Boomerang)* was there a serious push to update the game for the Nineties.

Among those myriad sequels spawned, the Mega Drive was the beneficiary of a limited-edition title known as *Panorama Cotton*, a *Space Harrier*-like affair with some stunning scaling and color-cycling effects (not to mention a ripping sense of speed). Essentially, *Rainbow Cotton* is the 'sequel' to that game, in theory if not in practice.

Graphically, this game's right up there with the best the Dreamcast has to offer. Its brilliant, achingly smooth animation and color palette (comparable only to, well, a rainbow) made damn sure that anyone who saw this game on video or in screen shots would be awestruck. I mean, look at the screens scattered about this page—beautiful, aren't they? But as is the case with **so** many games, it's only skin deep...



Yep, scratch that thick veneer of Estée Lauder off and you'll be confronted with the ugly truth: *Rainbow Cotton*'s really a man! All right, she's still a cute little animé chick—but the gameplay... Well, all I can say is... "Pain." Again, the game's very reminiscent of Yu Suzuki's über-classic *Space Harrier*, and features the same behind-the-back gameplay. Warning: You may want to read that last sentence again, 'cause that's where the problems start: It's not over-the-shoulder, it's **behind the back.** And the geniuses that they are at Success have made it so that you **can't** see through or around Cotton. This means that your view of foes, power-ups, and the entire world's always partially blocked, so you miss lots of enemies and valuable power-ups, and get pummeled by enemy fire every other second. It's agonizing, and completely ruins the game. Not to mention the control features, which would be called 'look-spring' in the FPS world... See, like some 2D shooters out there (*Ray Storm* leaps to mind), *Cotton* has the annoying habit of gravitating back to the center of the screen, whether you want her to or not; it just automatically re-centers the moment you let go. And the best part? *You can't disable it.* Time for a witch hunt, methinks...

Sure, I could regale you with tales of its cool branching level design and some of the more impressive boss moments—but who really cares? When a game is this poorly designed, I'm not going to send you, the gamer, out of your way to the store to pick it up. I think your best bet would to be to grab that broom and sweep this one under the rug... You'll get more use out of it than Cotton will. Maestro? Taps, if you will...

ECM is just upset about the recent resurgence of the art of midget tossing. The mats seemed somehow softer in the '80s...





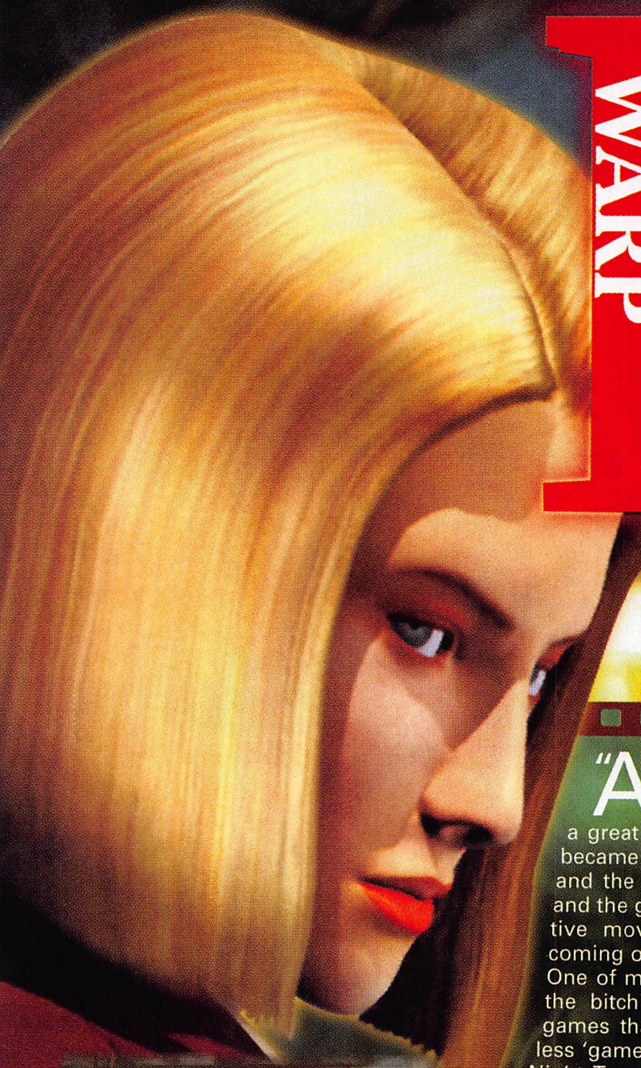




R REVIEW	ECM: SUCCESS? ANYTHING BUT...	DEVELOPER - SUCCESS	1 PLAYER	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 45
		PUBLISHER - SUCCESS	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	


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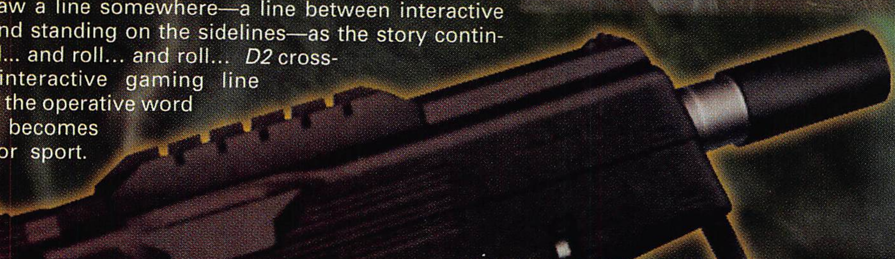
"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the games became as interactive movies..." <shiver>... the coming of the apocalypse, indeed. One of my worst pet peeves is all the bitching and moaning about games that are more 'movie' and less 'game' these days—games like *Night Trap* on Sega CD or *Dragon's Lair* on 3DO, PS games like *Final Fantasy VIII* or *Parasite Eve 2*. Yet, through it all, I've defended these avant-garde games (well, maybe not *Night Trap* as much) as fun *games* still... and then there was *D2*.

What started as an M2 game eventually became the first title officially announced for the Dreamcast; now, five years after development originally started on it, *D2* has arrived (though the M2 version is completely different from the DC rev). And as much as I like to rally to a game's defense, even I must draw a line somewhere—a line between interactive gaming and standing on the sidelines—as the story continues to roll... and roll... and roll... *D2* crosses that interactive gaming line ('active' is the operative word here) and becomes a spectator sport.













R REVIEW EGGO: NOT QUITE D-LIGHTFUL...	DEVELOPER - WARP	1 PLAYER	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 78
	PUBLISHER - WARP	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	





It opens with a nine minute-long CG scene: Laura's plane is hijacked, strikes a meteor, and then crashes on a snowy mountaintop... She wakes up in a cabin, and fellow passenger Kimberly Fox nurses her back to health.

From there, you assume the role of Laura and set out to explore the disturbingly white environs (creator Kenji Eno's reportedly said, "The theme of the game is 'white,'" and he wasn't kidding). Gameplay is built on two main functions: scanning for items, and shooting in the first person. The scavenger hunt plays a lot like the original *D*; explore rooms 'on rails,' open cabinets, gather items with the free 'look' option, and talk to characters. O.K., so it barely registers a pulse on the excitement meter... but that's pretty much what the original *D* was like (though it did have some challenging puzzles).



D2 shouldn't really stump you, either—Eno wanted to make a game easy enough for adults to get through (apparently, they were a large part of the audience that made *D* such a rousing success, over a million copies sold—eek!). Those 'adults' must not have any video game skills whatsoever; *D2* is one of the easiest games you'll ever play, one of those "you'll never see 'Game Over'" games that you'll finish with a lifetime supply of first aid sprays.







The other half of gameplay is comprised of FPS-like action sequences wherein packs of monsters suddenly pop up and charge you. It plays much like a gun game on a pad (bring back any bad memories for you *HotD2* fans?). Their frequency is just like an RPG's random encounters: Wander the world map too long, and you'll be due for a shootout. There's not much to it—turn, aim, and fire; it's fun in a mindless, *Berserk*-like, hack-and-slash kinda way.



The character models are some of the best you'll see; if this game had come out a few years ago as scheduled, it wouldn't have had to compete with the graphical tour de force *Shen Mue*. Nevertheless, *D2* is still one of the best-looking Dreamcast games yet. There's a ton of speech to go with the eye candy, as well—a large part of the reason why the game takes up four GDs.



When I say "a ton of speech," I'm talking about story sequences that take minutes at a time while characters carry on full conversations. This is one of the biggest problems I have with the game; there's so much dialogue and storytelling that you really don't get to play for very long. I'd say *D2* is 50% storytelling and 50% game play—for every minute you spend pumping mutant monsters with lead, you'll spend another minute listening to character conversations and story sequences you **cannot** skip. If *D2* had more game play and less idle listening, I'd give it a higher score. I really wanted to like this game. I was a fan of the first *D*, though I beat it in one sitting. Sadly, *D2* is but an average game because of its limited play time.





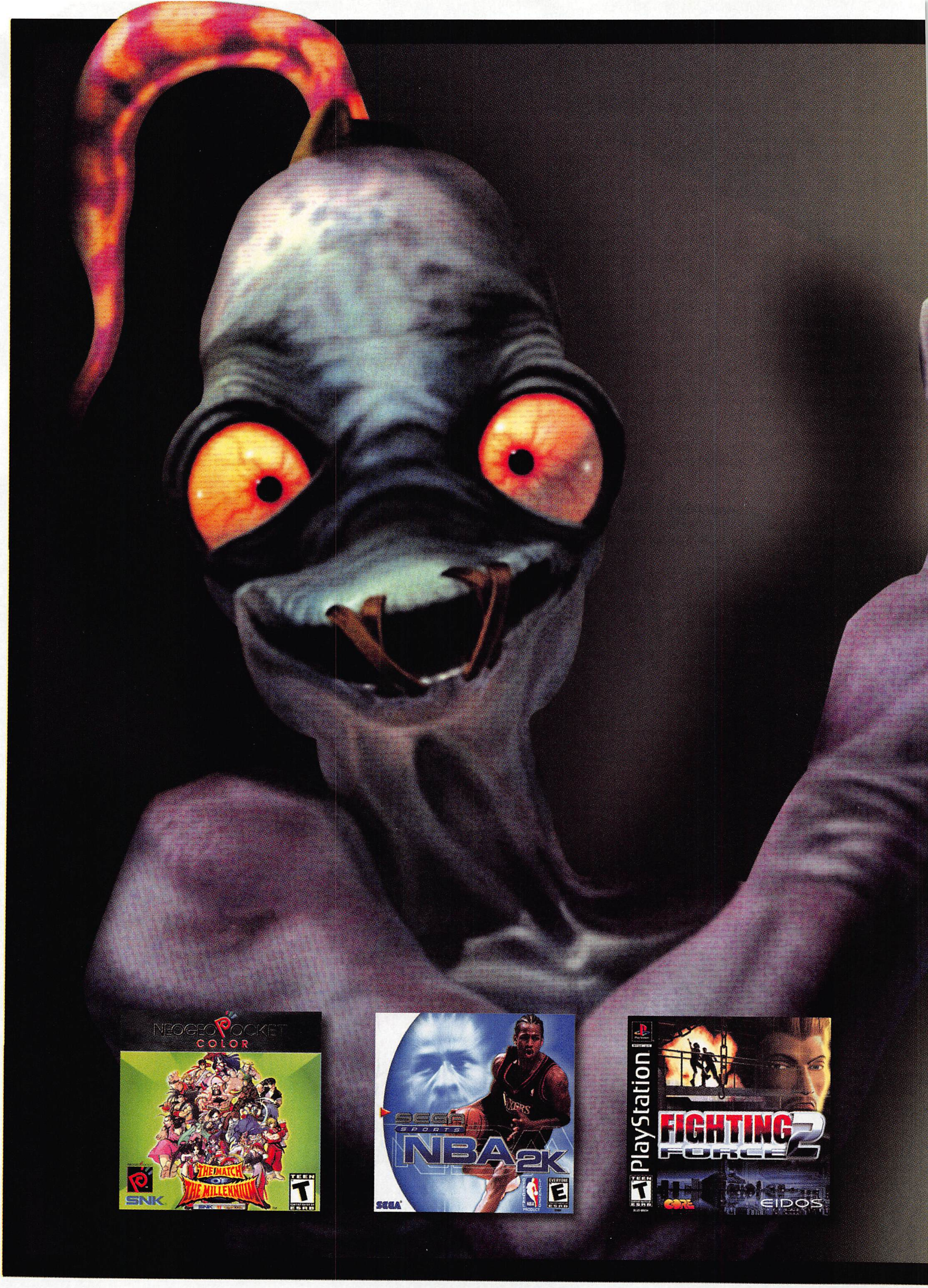
Sega of America's announced it will be releasing *D2* domestically, and it should be out around the middle of this year.

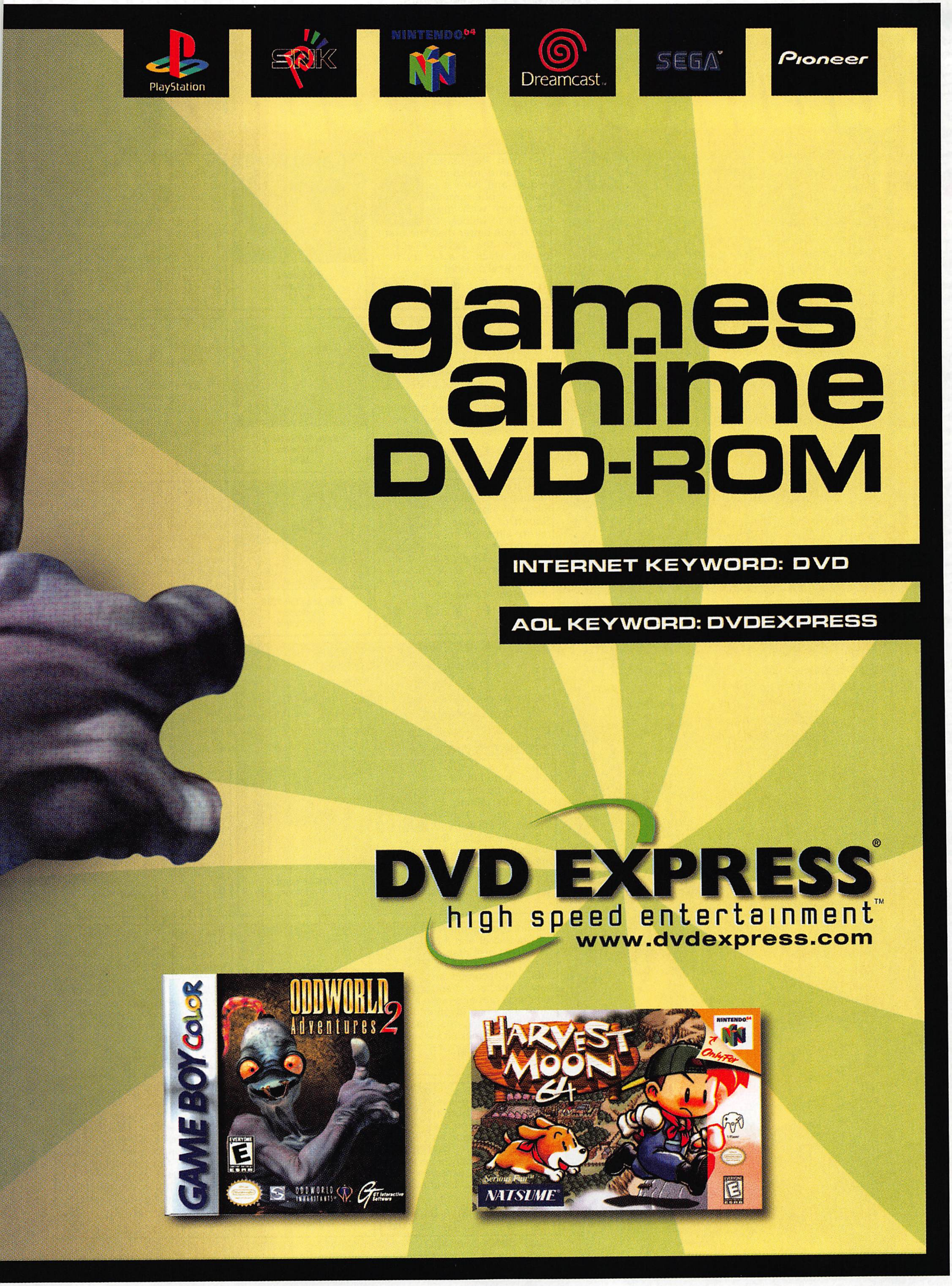
Eggo believes that if this game doesn't do well, Laura can always change her last name to Croft and become another marketing tool.

Too Hot For U.S. Release!

SoA will bring *D2* here—but we won't get the same version as the import. Kenji Eno's officially announced that the game will be modified for U.S. release; perhaps phallic scenes such as this will be censored from American eyes naïve to the ways of those evil tentacles. But thanks to GameFan's daring cameramen (Shidoshi volunteered without much arm-twisting), we present the scene to you in its original, unmodified form... the way Japanese audiences saw it. Not for the faint of heart, eh?




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GameFan Sports

It figures after years of being a devoted Houston Oilers fan that they move to Tennessee, the U.S. equivalent of the 6th ring of Hell, and then go to the Super Bowl—after I had given up on them. Oh, how excrutiating it must have been for McNair to see his reciever stretched out at the one yard line trying to break the plane of the goal, as time expired on the game clock. Almost as excrutiating as watching the Oilers blow a 35 point lead in the '93-'94 playoffs, sending me into a drunken rage through the halls of my fraternity house. Boy do I know how to pick 'em.

My worst nightmares seem to be coming true. Hockey, my favorite genre of sports game, is about to deliver what should be the Holy Grail of hockey sims. The operative word here is "should," though, because I have played the preview version (one that is frighteningly close to reviewable) and instead of the Holy Grail, I may get stuck with a Dixie cup. *NHL 2K* looks as though it will fall far short of expectations. Even without comparing it to *NFL 2K* and *NBA 2K*, it cannot stand on its own. Currently Visual Concepts is trying to help Black Box (a very talented team) right the wrongs, but it may be too little too late. I must ask again, why didn't they share the *NFL 2K* engine...? However, I can sleep soundly with the knowledge that EA Sports is currently working on its PS2 lineup, which undoubtedly includes a 128-bit installment of my beloved *NHL* series.

Speaking of EA Sports and hockey, I told you last issue that I would go into more detail about the upcoming *Rock the Rink* game from the sports gaming gurus. Well, I lied. I will talk about it next issue when I have more time and when I have recovered from my shellshock from the anemic *NHL 2K* preview. Hopefully by then I will have more information on Midway's upcoming hockey title which will be directly competing with *Rock the Rink*. —*El Niño*





The best PlayStation golf game needed a sequel and here it is. Same phenomenal gameplay with more goodies to unlock. I'd say it was better than the first if not for the lame character design which is a far cry from the original's. Doh!

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 7 **91**



Hot Shots 2
PlayStation
SCEA



Oy, what happened here? The cutesy characters from the original have been 86-ed to be replaced with a bunch of "Wrongway Trousers" looking rejects. Gameplay is still as good as ever, but that special feel that we liked ain't there no more. Sowwy...

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 7 **90**



There are way too many racing games available for the PlayStation and way too many rally games in the racing genre. Of all of them, though, this title shines the brightest. If it had more cars and some street racing, it would be better than *Gran Turismo*.

G 9 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 7 **90**



Colin McRae Rally
PlayStation
SCEA



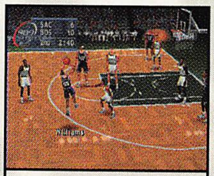
Yeah, I don't like rally racing—particularly when it's up against its asphalt brethren. All in all, though, if rally is what you need there's no better fix than *Colin McRae*. I'm not going to give up my *GT2* for this one, but if I ever need a real rally racer...

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 8 **88**



Well it's about time... missing from last year's batch of hoops sims, *ShootOut* makes its return, although not as triumphant as I would have liked. A solid title, it doesn't excite as much as you'd think a game that had an extra year of development time should.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 6 O 5 **85**



NBA ShootOut 2000
PlayStation
989 Studios



It has been a long time coming but it is finally here. I still prefer the depth and control of *Live*, but *ShootOut* still has all of the necessary elements that compose a solid basketball sim. If you need to find a substitute for *Live*, then look no further.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 5 **84**

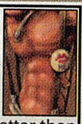


Yup, it's a NASCAR title... but I liked it. Surprisingly, this is the most entertaining EA racing game I have played. Think Wipeout with Ricky Rudd. Race against all of your favorite NASCAR drivers in a world of crazy tracks and even crazier power-ups.

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 7 **85**



NASCAR Rumble
PlayStation
EA



I do not share the same affinity for this game that El Niño does. I like the idea of fusing combat racing with NASCAR, but the engine is only so-so. Better than *Jeff Gordon Racing*, but not the Redneck *Wipeout* I would have liked to see.

G 7 C 6 P 6 M 8 O 7 **77**



The first golf game for the Dreamcast and it is nothing more than a rip-off of *Hot Shots*. Cute characters, an easy interface and some nice graphics make it worth a look, but not enough effort was put into utilizing the machine's capabilities to make it a stand-out.

G 8 C 7 P 6 M 6 O 6 **70**



Tee Off
Dreamcast
Acclaim



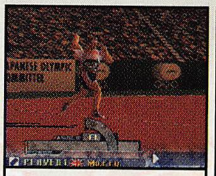
Let's take the solid gameplay engine of *Hot Shots* and add in the Hi-Res looks that only the DC can offer. Sounds like a good formula, but *Tee Off* fails in one area—personality. A nice freshman try in the DC golf department, but just a smidge off the green.

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 4 O 2 **71**



More of the same, but fun none-the-less. Your favorite button masher is back and it is as far from *Nagano* as any game can get (phew!)... Basically, a very shallow one player experience but great for parties. Let the smack talking begin...

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 5 O 7 **86**



International Track & Field
Nintendo 64
Konami



Better graphics, same old gameplay... but how much innovation can you really expect from a *Track & Field* game? Konami's tried-n-true *T&F* formula still makes it a solid multi-player game. Just make sure to invite friends cuz the one player game is zzzzzz...

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 5 O 5 **80**

NHL 2K

Dreamcast

Developer: Black Box **Available: now**
Publisher: Sega **# of Players: 1-4**

P Review

Usually, I only cover a game twice—once in a preview, then the review. For *NHL 2K,* though, I'll make an exception. For one, we previewed it last August, before anyone else knew about it—and we know how short people's memories are. Second, hockey is my bread and butter, and there are few titles due this year that have me as excited as this one.

I sense impending doom, however, because the newest build of *NHL 2K,* which is nearly complete, isn't exactly where it should be. It makes me wonder whether or not Black Box has what it takes to deliver a product worthy of the resuscitated Sega Sports name. It also makes me wonder why on earth Visual Concepts didn't share its monstrous engine with the smaller Black Box. At this juncture in the Dreamcast's life, it's absolutely vital that every sports title be exemplary—'cause you know EA Sports will be there eventually, and it's important to establish Sega Sports now.

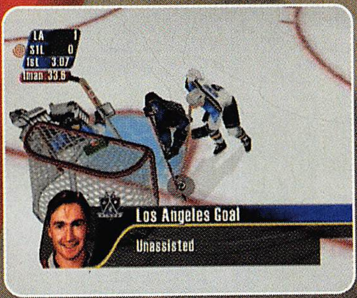
Some have knocked the graphics of *NHL 2K,* complaining that it doesn't look as good as *NFL 2K* or *NBA 2K.* Whatever... Just because it doesn't look as pretty as those two games doesn't change the fact that it is *the* best-looking hockey game ever, lower poly count or not. Graphics aren't where this game shows weakness, though, and that's what scares me...

At this point, the game's greatest problems lie in the gameplay, commentary, and AI. The gameplay issues stem primarily from the game's speed—it's just too slow right now, and with some sluggish passing and shooting response time, the game can bog down. And as far as commentary's concerned, it just doesn't pass muster. I can't help but say that it doesn't even come close to the quality of play-by-play and color seen in both *NFL 2K* and *NBA 2K;* let us pray this is fixed.

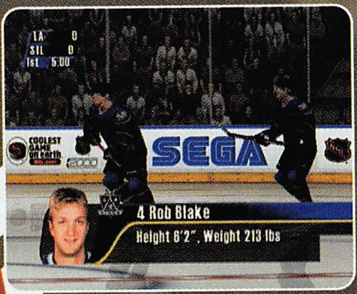
The final problem is the one that irks me the most: AI. Black Box is comprised of many very knowledgeable hockey fanatics; they made up the core group that brought us the stellar *NHL Powerplay,* and have no excuses for shoddy AI. They're Canucks, for crying out loud! The power play AI's off, as well as several other small areas I noticed in my testing, and to be able to pick out AI holes with so little effort is always a sign of deeper-rooted AI problems. Keep praying, people.

NHL 2K looks like a wounded animal right now; there's still time to fix these problems, however. Visual Concepts has stepped in to help the final stages along—maybe it can help. It's times like this that I actually hope a company decides to push back a release date and re-tool. I, for one, can wait, if it means the final product will be a superior one. After all, there's nothing worse than a product rushed because some 'suits' want to make the fiscal quarter... **EN**



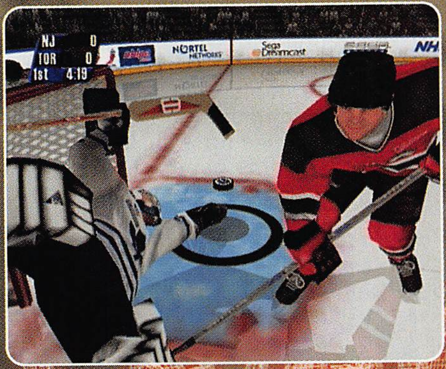












Colin McRae Rally

R Review | Developer: SCEA | Publisher: SCEA | Available: Spring | # of Players: 1-2

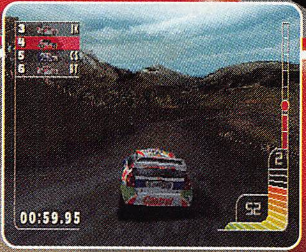
With so much hype for the underachieving drivel that passes as 'games' these days, it can be hard to get excited—even for the most heavily anticipated titles. Then there are games like *Colin McRae Rally* (*Colin McRae 2,* in Europe), a title so outta left field that when you start playing it, you feel as though you've discovered a lost treasure.

Colin McRae will surely be overlooked in the whirlwind surrounding *Gran Turismo 2,* but it really is the best rally game developed for the PlayStation to date. While all the yes-man editor monkeys in the industry are proclaiming *GT2* as the second coming, I feel that its graphics are worse than its predecessor's, and there just isn't enough new stuff in the game to warrant forking over the dough. No, my vote goes to *Colin McRae Rally.* It's an outstanding game, and is one of the reasons I still get up in the morning.

This is a rally simulation—not an arcade experience—so don't expect a bunch of cars crashing into each other, jumping dirt moguls, and running on railroad tracks. *Colin McRae* is all about the real rally experience, spending more time battling the harsh terrain and less time trying to outmaneuver other cars. In fact, you shouldn't even see any other cars on the many courses spread throughout the world; the game's about getting the best time (as compared to your opponent's), not being first to the finish line.

The sound and control are all top-notch; I feel that the engine is, in fact, even better than *GT2*'s (wipe that smile off your face, I'm serious), and delivers better graphics and car physics. It doesn't include as many cars or extras, but *Colin McRae* nonetheless has an ample variety of both rally vehicles and courses. Add the ability to customize each race, and you've got all the necessary ingredients for a deep, enjoyable racing experience.

Colin McRae Rally may be the best racing title on the PlayStation; you owe it to yourself to check it out if you weren't planning on it already. **EN**







Hot Shots 2

R Review | Developer: Clap Hands | Publisher: SCEA | Available: 3/7 | # of Players: 1-4

How do you improve on a game that's destined to be a classic? Well, usually you don't. All you can hope to do is to deliver the same quality experience with enough extra goodies to make people who bought the first game return to buy the second. This is the credo most sports game developers live by (even if their game's far from classic).

Hot Shots Golf isn't exactly your garden-variety sports title, though. It appeals to both the sports fan and the average gamer who cares little for the stat tracking and the realism of the genre. *Hot Shots Golf 2* tries to re-capture both audiences, and manages to do an excellent job of it... even if it is a slightly lesser product compared to the original.

Now here's a little background: *Hot Shots 2* is not the same game. The team that made the first *Hot Shots* is not the team behind the sequel. This time, it's only the lead programmer and his new team, Clap Hands. We won't go into the circumstances that led to the change, that we might protect the innocent (if any)...

Hot Shots 2 has the same great gameplay, variety of characters, and secrets to make fans of the first outing happy. There are more courses this time around, and a new trophy room—not to mention several different sets of clubs and balls to enhance performance and add depth. There are many more features and items to unlock as well, whether you finish first in the tournament year or choose to best all the other golfers one on one.

Now, what makes *Hot Shots 2* a lesser game than its predecessor? Two words: character design. That's right—I'm pissed because they replaced the cool, big, cartoony heads with what I think are some pretty weak new golfers. Yeah, it's a pretty small complaint—but it has a dramatic effect on the game's overall look, and when you compare it to its predecessor—which borders on perfect—it's enough to knock it down a peg. **EN**

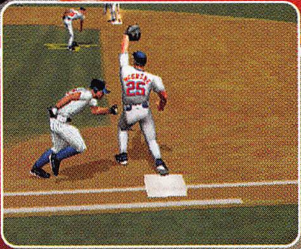


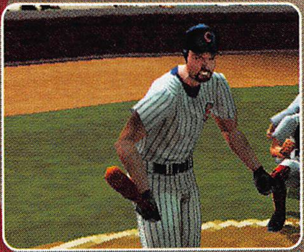




Triple Play 2001

PlayStation Preview | Dev.: TREY ARCH | Avail.: Opening Day | Publisher: EA Sports | # of Players: 1-2

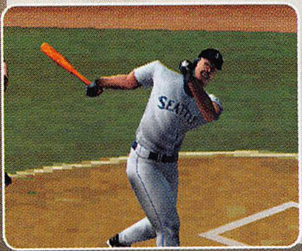






With any luck, this'll be the last *Triple Play* we see on the PlayStation—not because it sucks; lord knows it doesn't—but because I want to see what EA can do with this game on the PS2 and Dreamcast (assuming the stockholders made a big enough stink about its lack of support).

I also want to see this game make the big step to 128 bit, because it is clear by looking at *Triple Play 2001* that they've finally run out of things to do with the franchise; like all the other 32- and 64-bit baseball titles, it's played out.



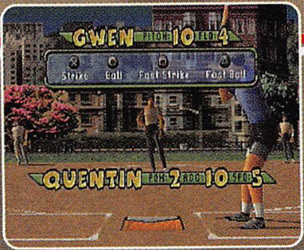
You know they're scrounging for something new when they're picking up licenses for things like the "500 Home Run Club." Somebody tell me what this is, and why I should possibly care? What's next, the "Players With More Than One Illegitimate Child Club?" Please. I am fully aware of the impressiveness of this feat—but come on, do they really get their own license? An even better question: How does this make a baseball game any better? A great answer would be: It doesn't.

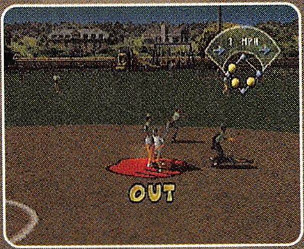
No need to harp on that, though; it just strikes me as hilarious in this license-happy industry. Let's talk about what *TP 2001* has to offer. On top of the 500-homer license, they also have the rights to the Big League Challenge, so you can partake in the MLBPA's version of the QB challenge; there's also the addition of secret power-ups, teams, and stadiums to unlock in "Arcade" mode. Finally, the graphics, color booth, and AI have all received their annual augmentation, making *TP 2001* a step above the previous versions.

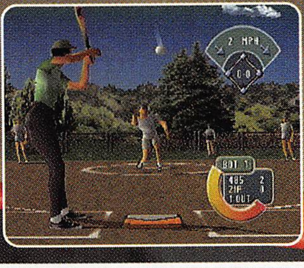
I really can't say yet whether this all translates into a "must have" or not; with so many versions of it and other franchises out there, it becomes harder and harder to justify buying a new baseball sim. Still, this is *Triple Play*—and you know it'll be one of the best on the market. **EN**

Sammy Sosa Softball

PlayStation Preview | Developer: 3DO | Available: 1st. Qtr. | Publisher: 3DO | # of Players: 1-8







Now this is a game I'm glad to see in development. Why they felt the need to blow all the cash to license a player that has absolutely nothing to do with the sport is a tad confusing, but what do I know? Maybe Sammy's a big fan of softball...

The sport (or leisure activity—however you wanna classify it) of softball is one of the most popular activities in the U.S., and for good reason; it's one of the few in which fat, middle-aged men can still get out into the fresh air and do something quasi-athletic. It's also an excellent excuse to roll a keg out onto a baseball field...



Sammy Sosa Softball Slam will be an arcade experience featuring most of the typical bells and whistles that accompany these types of products; power-ups, wacky plays, and general antics will highlight the gameplay. Other than the obligatory cyber-Sammy, all the teams will be stocked with a motley crew of stereotypical softball players (it's all about the girl in the short shorts). You'll also have the option of customizing your whole squad, from body types and names to attributes.

To appeal to the widest audience possible, the game'll feature several difficulty levels, including a Family mode... Yeah, that's what we need, a game that'll get the whole family in front of the TV, zoning out. "Mom, when's dinner?" "Not now honey, I'm trying to beat the Sammy Slammers!"

It is good to see some developers offer something new in the sports genre; I just hope the final product has some good gameplay. Remember, this is from the company that unleashed *High Heat Baseball* on us... an average (at best) baseball sim. **EN**

Symptoms of Fear:

Perspiration

Dilation of Pupils

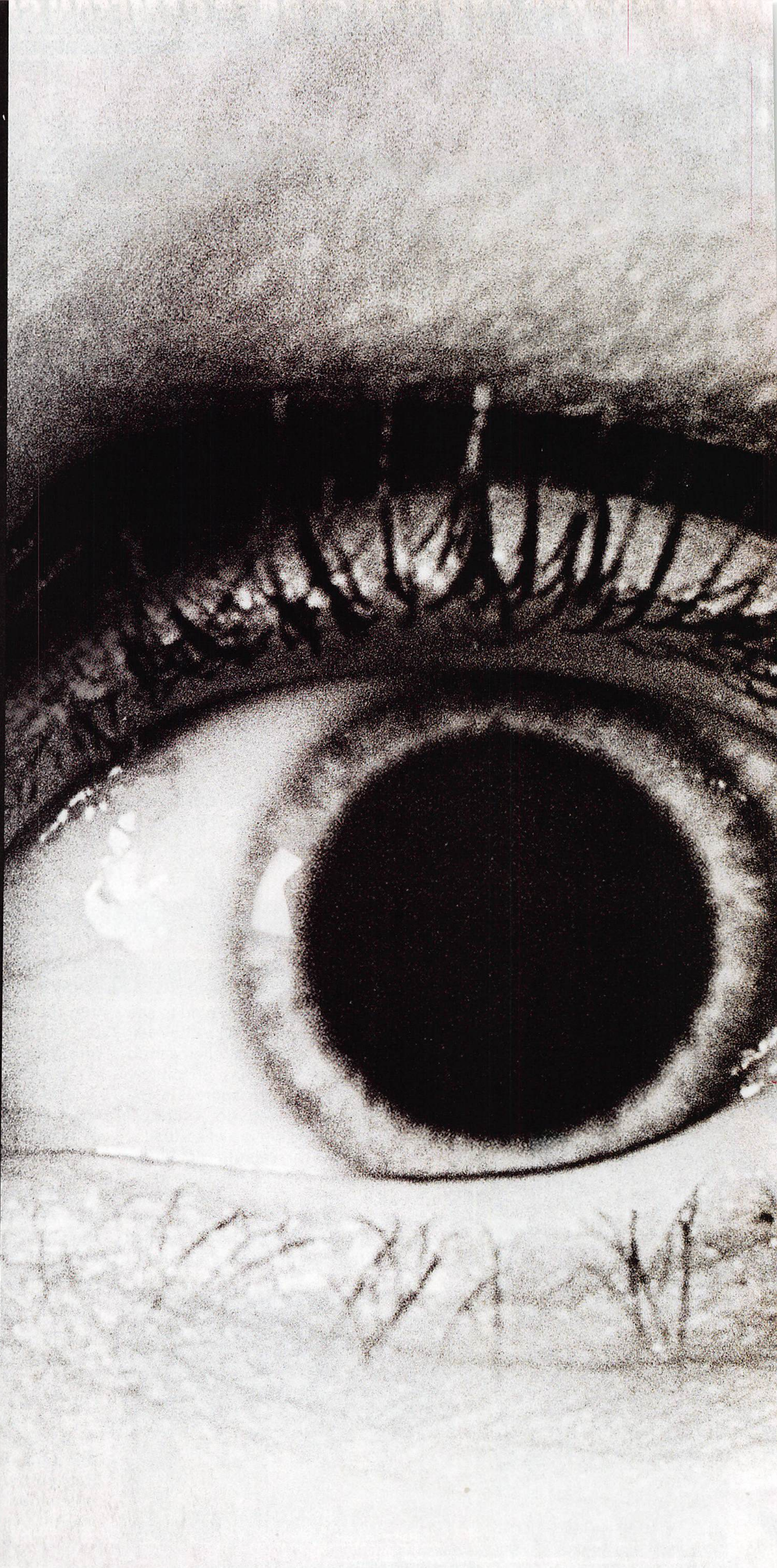
Trembling

Nausea

Loss of Appetite

Dry Mouth

Remember, the only thing to fear is fear itself. Especially in this deadly mercenary mission where your own emotional responses determine what happens next. So go ahead, make your move. Just be sure to keep your fear in check.




PlayStation
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
KRONOS
DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT INC.
EIDOS
INTERACTIVE
eidos.com
NON-INTERRUPTED GAMEPLAY for more debilitating action and power. Comes in handy for the THREE RUTHLESS MERCENARIES whose destinies you control.
MOTION FX TECHNOLOGY. Pre-rendered, fully animated backgrounds creating a frighteningly real world.
Breakthrough SUSPENSE/ACTION ADVENTURE game. Beyond your realm of fear. Beyond any 3rd person game created.
fear effect™
It can recognize your fear. Can you?
registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

Quarter Crunchers

Welcome to the new and improved Quarter Crunchers: ECM and I have made some changes that'll make it that much better in affirming our love for the Coin-Op. The first thing wide-eyed readers will notice is our new Happy Funny Arcade Box o' Fun. This li'l section'll be about pretty much anything, from arcades to wacky stuff we've run into. We're up for anything, so if you've got something of interest, drop me a line.

Another much-needed section is Arcade Viewpoints; now you can compare what we think of a specific title, and tell us if we're as crazy as the one-armed pickle man. But wait, I'm not done yet—there's still more—we've added the info bars seen throughout the rest of the mag. That's kinda pertinent information... From now on, we'll include the developer, publisher, and other info. at the bottom of the page. That'll pretty much do it for changes to QC, at least for now...

In other news, as you flip through this issue, you'll notice that the ASI (Amusement Showcase International), the annual amusement convention, is but a couple of weeks away. When the time comes, ECM, Hi-Fi, Dangohead, and I will embark on a short, one-hour flight to Sin City for some fun 'n games. Hopefully, we'll return with a load of info on what's due in the arcade scene in the next six months or so.

As for current news: *Marvel vs. Capcom 2: New Age of Heroes* has been spotted at various test sites in Osaka, Japan. This most recent update to the series boasts a hefty cache of fighters new and old. Among the huge cast of characters are Ruby Heart, SonSon, Amingo, Hayato, Ryu, Zangeif, Guile, Morigan, Anakaris, Strider Hiryu, Jin, Captain Commando, Bareeta, and Gouki. From the Marvel side, we'll see Cable, Marlow, Cyclops, Wolverine, Shuma Gorath, Ice Man, Captain America, Spider Man, the Hulk, Venom, Dr. Doom, Juggernaut, and Magneto. That's just the begi ning, though—expect to see close to sixty chara ters by the end. Even crazier: This new Capco fighter will sport true "Garden Grove Thug Tactics (for the uninitiated, this term refers to gameplay th surpasses the realm of cheesy or cheap and ente into the lowest depths possible). It's been said th combos in excess of the 100 mark won't be impo sible. In fact, I'd say it seems very possible—th Super Meter will max out at 9 supers. We'll hav more on this one after ASI...

Another sequel on test in Japan is *DOA Millennium*. More info on this one should b available shortly—ditto for *Power Stone 2*. S until I return from the Venetian, keep your grubb little paws off my HGA... **Cerberus**



Arcadia

Our first Arcadia comes straight from the Land of the Rising Sun... Yes, Japan's a wild and crazy place—especially if you're a video game and electronics fanatic. Our resident ninja (gamer) recently made a trip across the Pacific, to pay a little visit to our friends at Square—and what trip to Japan is complete without a stroll through Akihibara and Shinjuku? Besides attending Square's millennium event, Eggo made the rounds at local arcades, wiping the floor with unsuspecting Japanese gamers.

One of the major differences between U.S. and Japanese arcades is the actual arcade cabinets. Instead of the bat-shaped joystick we've come to love, Japanese cabinets use knob-like ball joysticks. The sticks are much shorter than ours, and the buttons work by magnets instead of springs. Yet what'll probably strike U.S. gamers abroad as most strange is the machine setup. You won't find many arcades where opponents stand side by side. Japanese arcade machines are set up in a way that you may never know who you're fighting against. This unique aspect makes multi-player battles a whole new experience.

As a whole, Japanese arcades are a lot cleaner and brighter—not as seedy as, say, the LACC arcade on Vermont, in the heart of Los Angeles, CA. They're brightly lit, and feature anything from stores to cafes located within (or adjacent to) them. Players also seem to be much more courteous, and regularly compliment opponents.

Racing, shooting, and fighting games fill most U.S. arcades (as they do in Japan), but there are a slew of other genres yet to be exploited. Dancing and music games are super hot in Japan. It's not uncommon to wait half an hour to get in a song or two on games like *Dance Dance Revolution* or *Guitar Freaks*. Perhaps American arcades should investigate...

Is the huge price of admission worth a trip to Japan? If you're anything like us, then Japan is your proverbial Disneyland. So save your pennies—it's money well spent if you're as hardcore as we think you are.

Crisis Zone







As much as I live for gun games—*Silent Scope,* et cetera—I know the genre has its flaws, and big flaws at that. Until Namco's *Time Crisis,* there wasn't much control in terms of free movement (for the most part, anyway); gun games tend to be those "shoot or be shot" type of adventures. Close your eyes, and every gun game is the same—shoot anything that moves. *Time Crisis* gave the gun game a much-needed blast of control, something the genre's always lacked. You still couldn't move around freely, but *Time Crisis* did add the Dodge/Reload Pedal; instead of taking enemy shots like a sitting duck, players with lightning-fast reflexes could take cover behind obstacles.

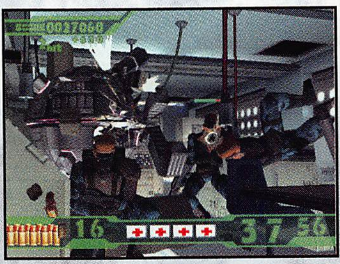




The third installment in this series is the first to feature a fully automatic sidearm. This latest adventure is a solo mission; no link play is available, at least not yet. So with a fully automatic gun in one hand, and a wad of Golfland tokens in another, I decide to give *Crisis Zone* a go. I grab the AK-47-like piece, and I notice that the force feedback mechanism is encased—there are no exterior moving parts on this gun. It's also significantly heavier than most other game guns... I can't recall feeling so "in tune" with a gun game in a long time.



You get an unlimited amount of firepower to play with, as well—now, you can plow through anything in sight, and the piece is even more impressive. Barrels, magazines, shelves, plate glass—nothing's safe from your wrath. If you've ever wanted to feel like John McClane, this is the game. There's no Hans Grüber (sorry), but don't worry... Namco'll keep you busy with a sea of armed thugs. The pesky red soldiers still fire the "killing shot," and I didn't even realize how much faster their bullets are until I was hit. I'd say *Crisis Zone* is the most difficult of the *Crisis* bunch. Its enemies are smarter, its bullets faster, and its bosses meaner. Give the Wolverine/Hulk-wannabe team a shot, and tell me they're not a pain in the dupa...

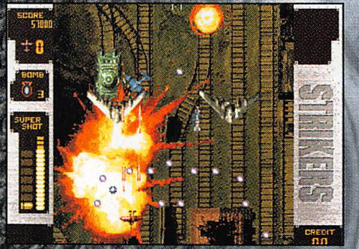
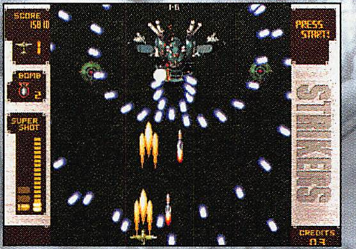
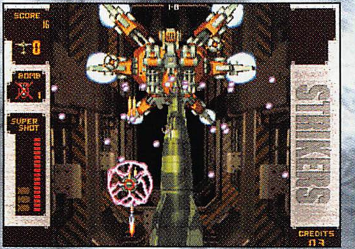
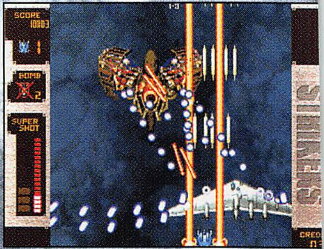
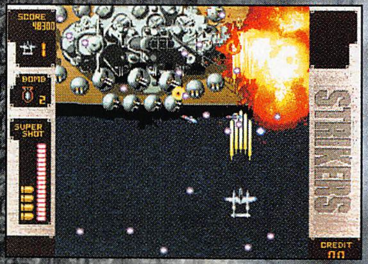


Gun games are a dime for two dozen nowadays. So does *Crisis Zone* deserve three quarters? Well, it falls somewhere between "solid" and "really cool;" it's definitely no *House of the Dead,* but it's not a dog, either. *Crisis* fans will probably lose interest in this one rather quickly... the Uzi removes a lot of the skill factor. On the other hand, it adds a lot of excitement, too. It's a Catch-22—play mindlessly for fun, or play and complain about the loss of skillful shooting.

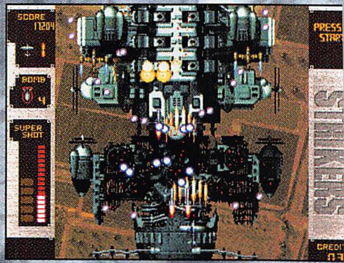
Cerberus is saddened that legislation may pass concerning the prohibition of arcade gun games. Is nothing sacred?

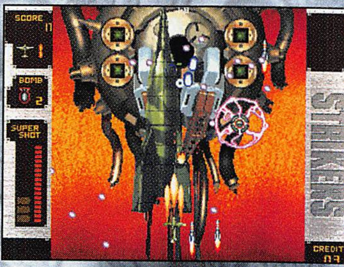
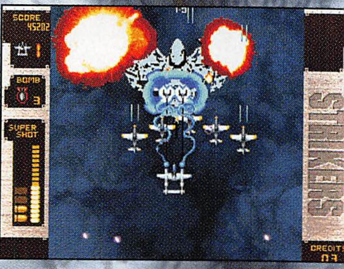
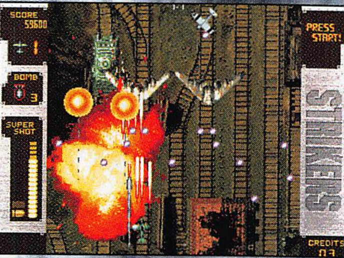


Viewpoint Score	Developer - Namco	1 Player	Cerberus:	R Review
:87	Publisher - Namco	Available Now	Yippie-kai-yay!	


STRIKERS 1945 PLUS



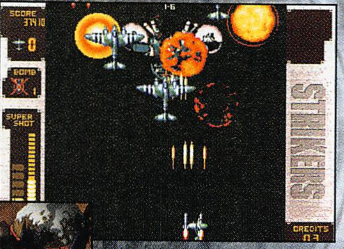
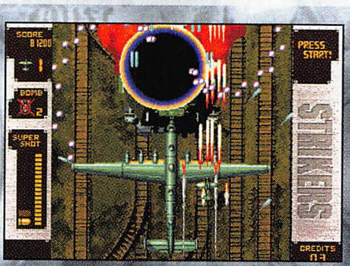




Theories on why 2D shooters are so rare aren't too many. Some say that people just don't appreciate 2D graphics anymore. Some believe that the gameplay is too simple for players nowadays. And of course there's ECM's theory that any shooter that he plays and doesn't own immediately phases out of existence after he touches it. Whatever the case may be, 2D shooters are rare, and while their popularity may be dropping, the shooter-making machine known as Psikyo refuses to stop, as demonstrated with their newest shooter, *Strikers 1945 Plus*.

Nothing much has really changed to make *Strikers 1945 Plus* "strikingly" different (sorry, just had to say it) from the rest of the *Strikers* series. I can't say that I'm an authority on *Strikers*, but having played the import *Strikers* on the Saturn, there's little difference other than an addition of a ship or two. Like all 2D shooters, select from a number of different planes, each with their own speed, power, and charge ability. Charge ability allows you to shoot off a hybrid version of your main weapon only when it is fully charged. To charge this weapon, keep disintegrating all enemies you come in contact. The power-up system is the typical "blow up the 1 red ship out of 4 ships" system, then proceed to chase down the power-up, all while blowing more stuff up and avoiding a rainfall of enemy fire. And of course, you get the last resort/bomb button which either drops a Big Boy bomb on the field or calls in a squadron of fighters to provide additional firepower. Gameplay here isn't exactly ground-breaking, but it's fast and fun, definitely giving you a rush whenever you weave in-between enemy firepower. And trust me, in later levels, the number of bullets onscreen will make any casual gamer wet his pants.

Like its tried-and-true gameplay, the visuals in *Strikers 1945 Plus* aren't innovative. For the most part, the graphics remain about the same as earlier series. Yes, there are enough explosions for a 4th of July celebration, and explosions all receive that tons-of-debris effect that started with the *Raiden* series of fighters. But, let's face it, you won't be seeing anything beyond standard shooter fare. Boss enemies are animated the best, but certain bosses have some choppiness to their animation. And what's up with the propeller of nearly every plane having two frames of animation?

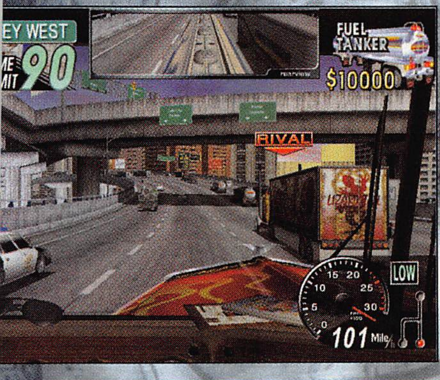
Sound ranges from patriotic good to "My car sounds better starting in the morning" bad. But nonetheless, *Strikers 1945 Plus* is a solid shooting game that, while not doing anything to improve the shooting genre, certainly does nothing wrong. So do yourself a favor—grab a few quarters, head to an arcade with this game, and play it before 2D shooters are gone without a trace. **Dangohead**

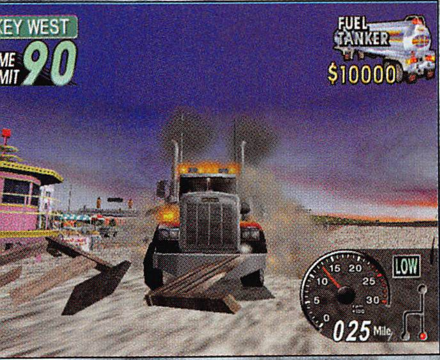







R REVIEW	DANGOHEAD: YOU CAN TAKE MY GUNS AND MY BULLETS, TOO.	DEVELOPER - PSIKYO PUBLISHER - SNK	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE :82





Trucks rock... there's just something primal and powerful about them. It definitely has something to do with their size, because, as we all know, the bigger the better (though there are exceptions—ECM). And while arcades are getting smaller and smaller all the time, those kind folks at Sega are still making arcade games bigger and bigger, and Sega's latest endeavor, *18 Wheel American Trucker,* may be one of the biggest arcade games ever... literally. All right, all right, it might not be as monstrous as *Galaxian III*—but they don't come much bigger than this game.

18 Wheel American Trucker runs on the NAOMI hardware. As its name implies, you're a trucker in the driver's seat of a fuel tanker running northbound to New York. Yes, it's a very LONG racing game, with lots of short cuts and alternate routes for you to take. Imagine *Outrun* on a Godzilla-like scale... you've got the idea. Anyway, it's part of Sega's Professional Series of games (which includes *Crazy Taxi, Brave Firefighters, Emergency Call Ambulance* and *Jambo Safari*), but it's a bit more humorous than the real life of truck driving—similar to how *Crazy Taxi* 'simulated' real cabbie life.

The most noticeable aspect of the game, though, is easily the cabinet. *Trucker*'s cabinet is ENORMOUS, with a huge steering wheel and a very cool horn (this sucker is LOUD!). The cabinet itself looks like it was torched right off of a real truck, chrome exhaust pipes and all. It's also got a huge bench that could easily seat a family, and the controls seem pretty similar to those found in any semi truck (though I wouldn't know, since Posty sold his a while back).

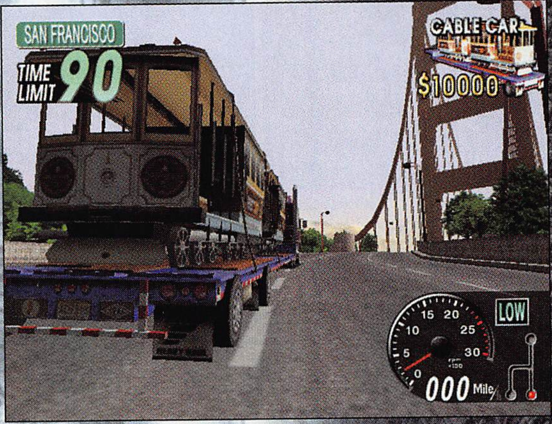
Again, *18 Wheel American Trucker*'s a racing game, and with all racing games, there are opponents to contend with. This one's no different; it features plenty of oncoming traffic, obstacles, and even rival truckers in your way. Luckily, there are no cops—so if you don't like the way that guy's looking at you, run him off the road!

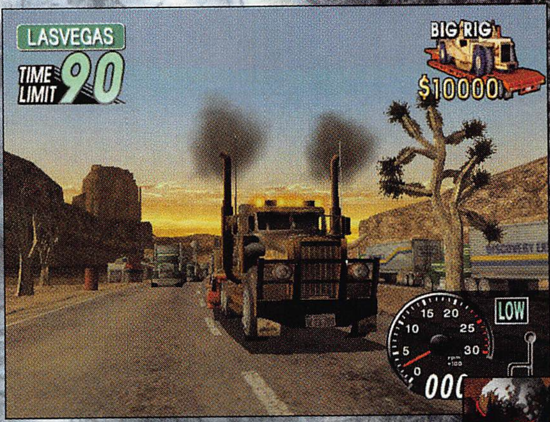
Graphically, the game looks like a standard NAOMI game—awesome—with detailed graphics and authentic road signs. My only gripe is about the framerate. I don't know what it is exactly, but it's definitely under sixty, and I'm really surprised it's less than anything I've seen in *Crazy Taxi.* In any case, *18 Wheel American Trucker* looks like an expensive machine, so don't expect to see it anywhere but at GameWorks. Look for more on this huge game in an upcoming issue of GameFan... **Dangohead**

EIGHTEEN 18 WHEELER WHEELER™

★★★ AMERICAN PRO TRUCKER ★★★







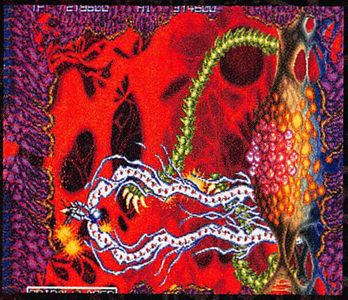
Developer - Sega	1 Players	Dangohead: East-bound and down, loaded up and truckin'...
Publisher - Sega	Available Now	

PREVIEW

XEXEX

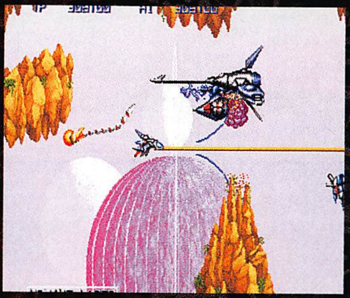
Graveyard

As is my wont, you'll notice that I tend to ramble a bit in my reviews, previews, Ed Zones, Graveyards, etc., etc. In fact, the mere mention of anything from Genesis to *Strider* will send me careening (with reader in tow—willingly or not) on a garishly sepia-toned trip through the dusty, cobweb-encrusted corridors of Nostalgiaville... It isn't always a pleasant trip, but it can be quite enlightening (or so I like to think). And in that vein, allow me to reveal to you a game that's been hidden from gamers' eyes for way too long...











While researching an upcoming article on shooters (yes, 2D-Against-the-World affairs), I happened to stumble across a near-legendary beast spoken of only in hushed whispers by the shooter fan elite—a creature of such awesome strength and oily guile that it had only been spotted by a few wary souls in the Land of the Rising Sun. As word of its infamy spread, I became obsessed with tracking down any last vestige of this mythical creature. So I commissioned a ship and a stout, surly crew to sail the Spanish Main, with one goal in mind: to acquire this enigmatic entity, and proffer it to you, the GameFan faithful, such that all may know the tale of: *Xexex*.

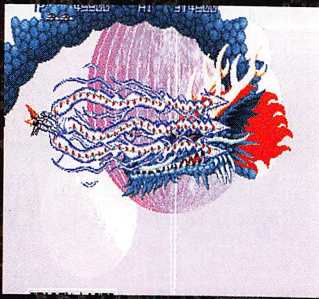
Xexex arrived in Japanese arcades at a time when the shoot-'em-up nigh ruled the Japanese scene with an iron fist (shortly before the rampant, unchecked proliferation of racing, gun, and fighting games). Companies like Taito, Toaplan, Irem, Jaleco, and yes, Konami—creators of *Gradius* (*Nemesis*), *Parodius*, and a string of other successful shmups. And into the fray came *Xexex*, with no name brand to back it up... It was summarily lost in the flood.

"...hidden from gamers' eyes for way too long..."

Essentially, it was the standard-issue side-scrolling shooter, replete with power-ups, wave after wave of enemy ships, and a host of other conventions that did little to raise it above its peers...except for the graphics. This is where *Xexex* excelled beyond all others.

From the second the game started, you knew you were looking at something special (circa 1991). The initial level featured a stunning water-fallic effect in the background that has to be seen to be believed. Beyond that, the 3rd stage played









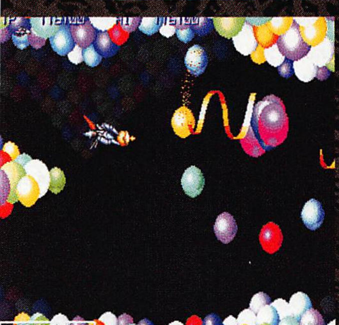


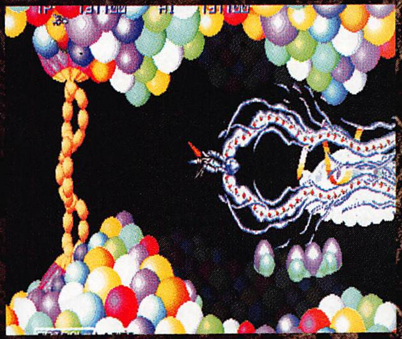






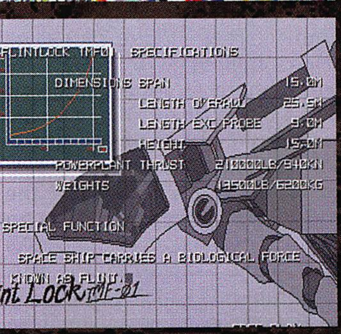






host to one of the single most impressive visual effects the world of gaming had seen up to that point. Visualize a giant, rotating, ringed world (think Saturn) rotating flawlessly in the background; sure, it may not be mind-numbing these days, but think of the force required to do such a thing 'back in the day.' It was probably effects such as these that prevented its console port in its era (man, that makes me feel **old**)—even the SNES, with all its Mode-7 trickery, would've been humbled trying to re-create some of the vistas in these sequences. And while it would easily have been handled by the sprite-cruncher that was the Saturn, its time had probably long since passed. Perhaps on a new Konami Classics collection...?

Gameplay in *Xexex* was an odd hybrid of Konami's arcade staple *Gradius* and Irem's *R-Type*; like *R-Type, Xexex* featured a 'pod'-type unit (known as the "Flint") that could attach to the front of the ship and protect it from most attacks. However, it could also be charged up, à la *R-Type*'s pod, and fire hyper-destructive beams of varying intensities. Add to that the fact that Flint could be deployed, attach itself to enemy craft (specifically bosses), do





"...one of the single most impressive visual effects the world of gaming had seen..."



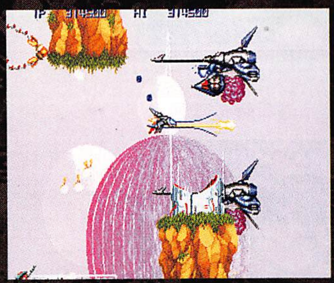
tremendous damage, and reduce them to so much shrapnel in short order...well, the Flint was simply the most amazing aspect of the game. It was equipped with three tentacles that would lash out and destroy weaker foes, as well as wrap itself around bosses—it was truly one of the most impressive graphical effects in the game, as each tentacle was animated independently. And for those of you that are worried if it's an *R-Type* 'memorize the levels and patterns' affair, worry not: the pacing was decidedly more *Gradius*-like; the game wasn't nearly as methodical (read: "slow-paced") as Irem's classic.

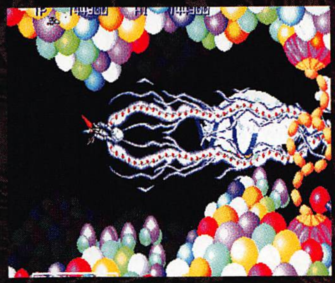
So now what do you do? After all, those of you that thrive on free games on the Internet (via emulation—shame on you) won't have that option this time around. *Xexex* has yet to be emulated by anybody...probably a direct result of its scarcity (one time when being an endangered species is a boon, I suppose). My suggestion? Well, you could go out and purchase a JAMMA cabinet and the board (if you can find one), or you could pray that Konami sees fit to give this game the console debut it deserves (I'm thinking *Konami Classics: The Shooters*). Until then, stare at these pics, and drool until that day comes...it could be a long wait. **ECM**

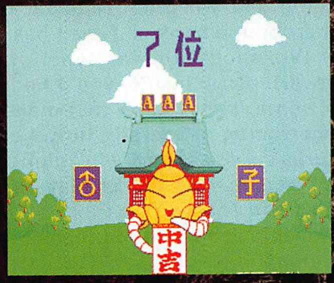














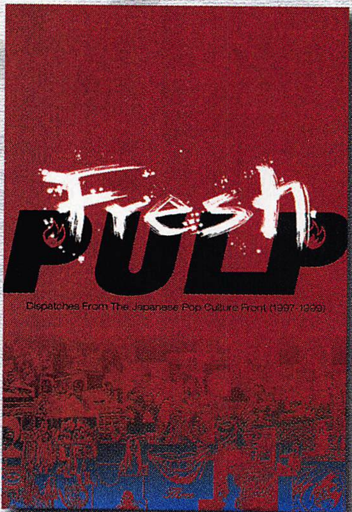
AnimeFan

Anime, Manga, J-pop, Asian Live Action, Otaku Culture

A Note from Shidoshi...

Okay, what gives SNK the right to make the Neo Geo Pocket Color so good? I'm going broke due to all of the awesome games on it! It's scary that a handheld is besting all of the consoles in games I want at a ratio of like 3:1. Not that I'm not still in love with the Dreamcast—what a wonderful system (I just wish Konami would hurry up and make me a DC *Silent Hill*). Hmm, since I have nothing else to say, I'd like to say hello to some of my friends out there. So, greets go out to Cutie-chan, Maurichu, the Omaha Squad, the Mirandites, my Aussie pal Cassiel, all of the good people on the NeoGeo ML and in rec.games.video.sega, and, of course, to everyone out there who has ever read AnimeFan, especially those of you who wrote in with kind words to say. For those of you who wrote in with unkind words... How could you? Don't you know how sensitive and emotionally fragile I am?! ^_^

Manga Scene



Fresh Pulp

$19.95 US • Special • Viz • 12+
184 pages • US Format • Graphic Novel

B+

If you think that all Pulp is about is collecting ground-breaking manga titles, think again. Along with *Dance Till Dawn*, *Banana Fish*, *Black and White*, and other such titles, *Pulp* also contains a number of editorials, stories, reviews, and looks at various aspects of Japanese culture and the effects it has on others. So now comes *Fresh Pulp*—a collection of the "other" aspects of *Pulp* and a quick look at the manga titles that make up the monthly manga anthology. *FP* contains a look at *Pulp*, giving a brief "what's happened so far" look at each of its manga titles, a profile on and Q&A with the creators, and a small timeline covering the history of *Pulp*. Then we get into the major portion of *FP*, the re-printing of the various written pieces that ran in Pulp from 1997 to 1999. What's here? We've got J.pop.hard.copy, covering everything from Anime to Manga to Video Games to Fashion and Dining. Then there is Pulp Cult, looking at those cultish aspects of life, from the infamous Sonny Chiba to legendary Japanese movie creator Akira Kurosawa and even to the American retelling of *Godzilla*. Hi-Fi/Lo-Fi proves that there is more to Japanese music than Namie Amuro and the J-pop flavor of the week. Shiratori's Laboritori comes from Chikao Shiratori, former editor of the alternative Japanese manga magazine Garo. Shiratori looks at various aspects of the manga scene in Japan, and talks about his feelings on how it's all going. This is one of those types of books that you don't just sit down and read all in one day. There is a wide variety of topics and articles contained within its pages, the type that are good when you have a few minutes of free time to sit down and read or on that long trip on the plane or subway. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't check it out, however—*Fresh Pulp* gives American anime and manga fans a look at aspects of the culture that many would never get a chance to experience. This is definitely worth picking up.

- shidoshi



Heartbreak Angels

$15.95 US • Humor • Viz • 18+
108 pages • US Format • Graphic Novel

B+

From my time reading Viz's *Pulp* publication, there was one title that always stood out in my mind: *Heartbreak Angels*. With its trademark dirty, somewhat messy look, *HA* was a series of four-panel strips that poked fun at a number of life's aspects with mature comedy. Now, if you've missed out on its run in *Pulp*, you can pick up the first *HA* graphic novel from Viz. Volume one contains all of the strips from *Pulp* Vol. 1 Number 1 through Vol. 3 Number 8. The first thing that you'll notice about this graphic novel is that it's a hardbound book and even has a dust jacket—very, very classy (Viz should reprint some of its classic manga titles hardcover). Once inside, you'll find a decadent collection of strips, some funny, some that make your scratch your head in uncertainty. Overall, however, I get a kick out of *Heartbreak Angels*, and you might as well. If you are the type of person who thinks that *South Park* is in bad taste, though, then *HA* won't be for you—its humor is even more questionable at times than those little hooligans. This book is recommended for mature readers. *—shidoshi*







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- Rei, Schmei... I'M the TRUE star of Evangelion!

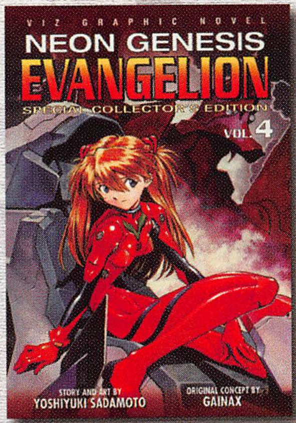
Evangelion

Manga Scene

Evangelion: Volume 4

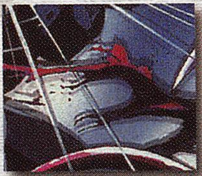
$15.95 US • Adventure • Viz • 13+ • 180 pages • Jpn Format • Graphic Novel **A+**

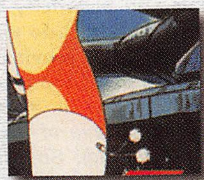
Aside from minor changes to move the plot along more quickly, the *Evangelion* manga has thus far simply retold the story we were presented in the anime version. It's an excellent complement to the original, however. It emphasizes aspects of the characters and setting that the anime didn't (or couldn't). Volume 4 takes this approach to the introduction of the Second Child, Asuka. Though she seems a shallow brat at first, her other side is brought out sooner and in much greater detail. Reading this volume also clarified a plot point or two that I managed to miss in the anime.



The latest installment also maintains the manga's standard for excellent visuals. Author Yoshiyuki Sadamoto deftly renders complex action scenes that would easily become confusing under other artist's pens. The character art is appealing (even if over-the-top facial expressions are used a bit much), and the mecha and backgrounds are realistic and beautifully detailed. A story this good and art this good are rarely found together in one package. I'm really enjoying the manga, but I don't think you have to be a fan of the anime to appreciate it, so be sure to give it a read if you haven't. —*Jay McGavren*

Shidoshi's Fun Corner





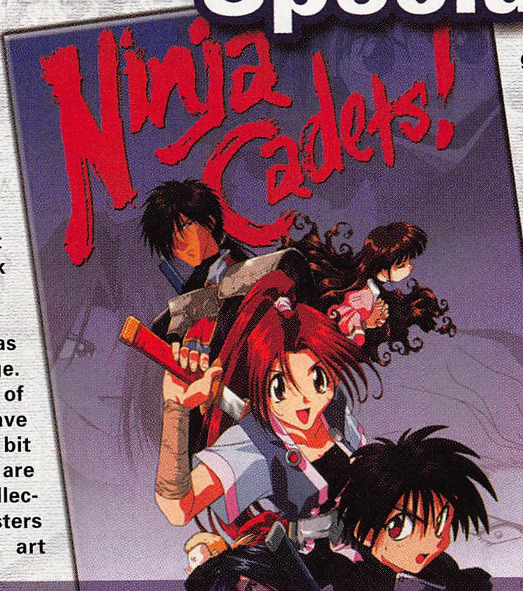



Here it is... the third installment of Shidoshi's Fun Corner, the little "game" that tests just how hardcore of an anime fan you are. So, have you passed the first two of my Fun Corners? If so, excellent job. If not, here's your chance to prove that you are at least semi-hardcore. Look to your left. See those six images? Each of those is but a small piece of the cover art to an anime. Each is from the US box art, and each comes from a major anime release—none of the smaller, obscure stuff here. Your mission is to figure out which box art each image is from. No answers, no prizes, just you and your wits to show just how deep your anime knowledge is. Pass this one, and it's on to my next Fun Corner in a future issue. Oh, and no running to your anime library to look at the cover art—I'll be watching you! Moo ha ha ha ha ha!

Special Feature

Slowly but surely, the last of the DVD holdouts among the US anime companies are falling one by one into the digital media. This time around, it's Media Blasters—who have released their first DVD title through their Anime Works label, *Ninja Cadets!* If you didn't catch my review of *NC!* way back when, it's a cool show.

For their first DVD, Media Blasters has put together a nice little package. Image quality is stable and clean all of the way through, though I would have liked to see the transfer have a bit more color richness to it. Extras are sparse, but nice. The required collection of trailers for other Media Blasters titles is included along with an art gallery and perhaps one of the coolest extras: outtakes. Included is a small selection of English voice actor bloopers, played over the scenes from the show in which they were to take place. This is a great little extra, and was nice to see. I did, however, notice a few quirks here and there. First, on my Toshiba player, the disc wouldn't always play unless I went to the menu first. As well, there are no "English" and "Japanese" labels on the subtitle and vocal tracks when switching them by remote—a definite no-no. Finally, I'd like to make of special note the disc art for *Ninja Cadets!*—it's great to finally see some nice artwork on a DVD disc for a change.



Ninja Cadets! DVD is a quality start from Media Blasters. There are indeed areas that need attention for future releases, but this is a solid offering for a first release.

Anime Drive-In



1999 is the Year of Destiny, when the fate of all mankind will be decided. Two sides fight for power—the Dragons of the Earth, wanting to cleanse the planet of humanity, and the Dragons of the Heavens, who think we humans are actually worth something. Standing in the middle is Kamui Shiro, a young boy with immense power who will decide which of the two sides will win. The question, however, is which side he intends to be on in the final battle.

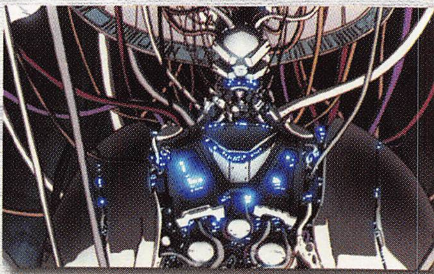
The test of any good movie is to create it with enough ties and connections to the series it is based off of to appeal to the hardcore fans, while giving enough background to be enjoyable by first-time viewers. This was my concern with *X: the Movie*, because if you know CLAMP, you know they can put together a long, complex story. If you've ever tried to jump into the *X/1999* manga without starting at the beginning, you know it can be a messy task. Thankfully, *X:tM* explained enough so that, even with no real *X* experience, I didn't have too hard of a time following along. We are introduced to the impending doom that lies in wait for the Earth, we are shown the two sides and the people who make them up, and we go along for the ride as the two collide. Don't get me wrong, there is indeed a sense that those familiar with the manga are no doubt going to appreciate and understand the movie more, but us *X* newbies aren't given the feeling of being left out too much.

X: the Movie

AF Best of the Issue!

Drama • Movie • Manga Ent. • 16+
98 min • Sub | Dub • Theater | VHS | LD | DVD

A-



However, I've known ABOUT *X: the Movie* for a long time, long before I had touched a copy of the manga or knew who CLAMP was. For years, two anime titles were always mentioned on the lips of others as "must sees"—*X* and *Memories*. They became larger than life in my head, because I had it drilled into me that they were just that. In fact, I honestly never expected to see either—it was sort of like the Ark or the Holy Grail, things of legend that you don't believe actually exist. Of course, finally seeing it, there was no way it could live up to my expectation (sort of like *The Phantom Menace*). *X:tM* isn't the mind-blowing experience I always imagined in my head, but you know what? It's damn good. For every anime title that lacks art quality, animation, or production, *X:tM* makes up for them in spades. This is one of those titles that proves, when done right, anime can be a real thing of beauty. I love big budget, well animated anime movies, the ones that really are "movies" (and not just glorified OVAs) and have the production and electricity to prove it. That, indeed, is what *X:tM* is. I do want to warn you that this is one of those movies that if you aren't in the mood to sit down and give it your full attention, you'll never make it all of the way through (very much like *Grave of the Fireflies* or *Night on the Galactic Railroad*). So, skip anime for about a week or so (to get the craving back up), head to your local theater, and experience *X: the Movie* on the big screen (where it belongs). Or, if it's not showing near you, wait patiently for the VHS or DVD copy in the near future. —*shidoshi*





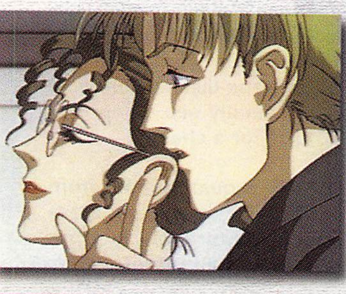
Pet Shop of Horrors: Volume 1

Horror • OAV • Urban Vision • 16+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

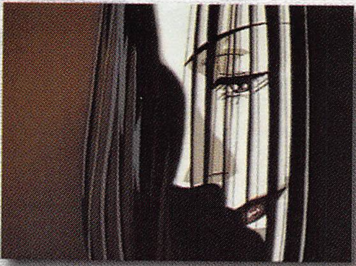
B+

What do you want most in life—and how much are you willing to pay to get it? That is the question that brings to life a darkened pet shop in a lonely corner of Chinatown. Run by the mysterious Count, those looking for that certain something can find an exotic pet that will make their dreams come true. But with reward comes responsibility, and those who get such a pet soon find out that they will get exactly what they deserve—and that isn't always a good thing. A lone cop decided to find out the secrets of the pet shop, and the strange happenings that seem to occur to many of its patrons.

Some of you will see the possibility that could come from such a series, while others of you no doubt are wondering what they can do with a show centered around a "mystical pet shop." After watching the first volume, I can tell you that the show does indeed do well in building upon the interesting premise, and both episodes were captivating (if for no other reason than the curiosity to see just how the latest poor sap was going to meet their end). This is one of those shows that, after watching, you just sit there thinking, "Wow... that was cool." I loved the voice acting, even though I wouldn't say it is the best that I've heard. The voice actor for the main detective reads his lines rather strangely, yet there's a certain charm to his style of acting. Finally, while I'm not a huge fan of the art style used for the show, it looks good the entire way through. *Pet Shop of Horrors* is an unusual and thoroughly enjoyable show that is a great choice for anyone looking for something different. —*shidoshi*










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Anime Drive-In

Gestalt

Adventure • OAV • Anime Works • 14+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B-



Long ago, the land was shaken and the Gods were challenged by another god by the name of Gestalt. It was said that Gestalt's intentions and desires were evil, so much so that his name can no longer be spoken—or so the legend goes. Oliver, a young priest, decides that he must find out the truth behind the legends. Along the way, he meets a young girl named Ohri who claims to be from "a new land." He wonders who the girl really is, if she is connected to the land of Gestalt, and is then shocked to find that she is a powerful sorceress. Oliver and Ohri then travel together on their way to unlock the secrets of the land and the god both know as Gestalt.

Gestalt has one of the funniest elements that I've seen in a long time as it starts—since Ohri cannot talk at first, she speaks via RPG-ish text boxes. It's a real shame the joke didn't go on for very long. *Gestalt*'s color and art quality are a sight to behold (call me what you will, but cel coloring on computers is definitely the future), and the cast of characters provided have enough personality and design to them to make them interesting. Unfortunately, while *Gestalt* has a lot of the pieces right, it never truly seems to get its feet off of the ground. While it certainly was fun to watch, it isn't deep enough beyond that point to give it any sort of lasting quality. As well, this is one of those titles that feels like we're only seeing a small part of a bigger series, helped none by the ending which leaves everything open and doesn't finish the story. So, besides having one of the best pieces of cover artwork in some time, *Gestalt* it good, but not great. Make this a feature-length movie, and strengthen a few parts of the show, and this could have been something special. *—shidoshi*





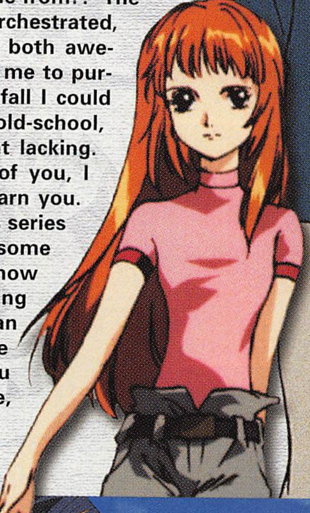
Brain Powered: Volume 4

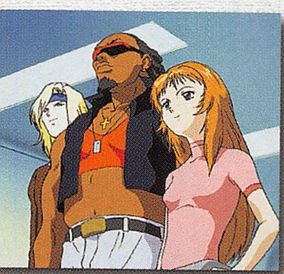
Adventure • TV (2 Eps) • Anime Village • 14+
50 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

A-

Big robot anime—for every great one created, there are at least ten more bad ones. The secret, of course, is to have a great cast of characters and a strong story to help support the mecha. Without them, even the coolest of robot designs are worthless. So, with that said, there is no wonder why I always go into any such anime with more than a bit of hesitation. Ahead of me were four volumes of *Brain Powered*—and I prayed that I would be saved from four volumes of misery. Someone smiled down upon me, because *BP* is indeed good. As unfair as comparisons really are, the best way to explain *BP* would be to say that it is very much in the vein of *Gundam* with a dash of *Evangelion* tossed in. "Brain Powereds" are giant living robots which are born from strange metallic plates. Two sides fight for ownership of these creatures—Orphan, an organization which looks to destroy mankind, and the crew of the Notis Noah, who want to stop Orphan from its plan. The story revolves around two unlikely heroes: Hime, a young girl who is paired up with a Brain Powered by accident, and Yuu, the son of two Orphan scientists who disagrees with their plans. As I got to the end of each volume, I couldn't get the next volume into the VCR fast enough—the true sign of a great series. Some may find *Brain Powered* slow and boring, but stick with it and I'm sure you will soon become engrossed. The characters are interesting and likable without trying too hard to be, and even the secondary cast seem important and take on personalities of their own. The mecha designs are unusual in a sort of *Five Star Stories* way, and even though they aren't as detailed as their manga version, they still come across well (the whole "get into the robot though the crotch" thing DOES weird me out a bit, though). As I said, *BP* feels a bit like *Gundam* (a GOOD thing), and that mostly comes across in the feeling and atmosphere of the story. And the music... where did this soundtrack come from?! The music during the series is beautifully orchestrated, and the opener and ending songs are both awesome. If one soundtrack screamed for me to purchase it, it's this one. The only downfall I could mention is the art style, which is very old-school, and the animation, which is somewhat lacking. That "old-school feel" bothers some of you, I know, so I thought that I would pre-warn you. Beyond that factor, I really feel that this series shines in every other way. I've read some truly horrible comments about this show from others—everything from there being no story to it being nothing more than an *Eva* wannabe. Well, anyone saying those things can bite me. I think that if you give *Brain Powered* an HONEST chance, and actually expect to have to use your brain a little while watching, you'll get into and enjoy the series. *—shidoshi*













Brain Powered

Sakura Diaries

Rmntc Cmdy • OAV • ADV Films • 16+ **A-**
90 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

A number of months ago, I had planned on bringing you a look at *Sakura Diaries* as an import tile that I hoped would make it to the US. Well, in my petitioning of companies to bring over things like *Photon* and *Hana Yori Dango*, I never thought to also bring up *SD*. Why? Well, to be honest, I wasn't sure if any US company would take a chance on it. Thankfully, however, ADV proved me wrong.







The reason for my uncertainty is the basis for the story in *Sakura Diaries*—the adorable Urara has a crush on the unlikeliest of people, her cousin Touma. Touma, trying his best to get into college and make a life for himself, is given no choice but to move in with Urara to be closer to school. Urara, however, ends up being far more of a hindrance than help due to her constant flirting with Touma. Then there is Meiko—the girl Touma is crazy for, but a girl who will only date a college guy. As I watched the first VHS volume, I waited with an uneasy feeling to see if the whole idea of Urara being Touma's cousin would be omitted—a fact that could have easily been taken out. Thankfully, ADV did no such tampering (though there were a few other differences between their dub and the fansub I first saw that bothered me).

Another big kudo for ADV comes due to the packaging—a topic rarely brought up. ADV, probably the reigning champs when it comes to packaging, have done an EXCELLENT job here—the box for the first volume looks stunning. Unfortunately, ADV seems a bit unsure in quite how to market *SD*, and went for the "let's up-play the sexy comedy side of the show" route. This disappoints me a bit, but it's probably what was needed to get such a title to attract attention. Oh wait .. that's right, I'm not done singing ADV's praises just yet. Not only are they bringing *SD* to the US, but we are also getting a day and date DVD release. I love you guys! Unfortunately, this will be the only way to see *SD* subtitled, as the VHS-only otaku out there will only have a dubbed version to purchase (a shame, but I sort of understand why). This makes the DVD release even more important, and hopefully the DVD's subtitle track will be a bit closer in translation to the original script. I recommend you picking up the DVD if at all possible when you check out *SD*, for while the dub isn't bad, it doesn't hold the same charm as the original Japanese voice actors provided (though I did grow from not liking the dub to being okay with it).

So what is it about the show that I like so much? I'm not totally sure. Yeah, it is a bit of a sexy comedy (it comes from U-jin... what else could be expected?), but for me it's more than that. It also holds a lot of light-hearted romance, and there's just this overall charm which makes *Sakura Diaries* a joy to watch. It's hard for me to pinpoint exactly what I love about this show, which of course is a bad thing when trying to write a review, all I know is that it won my heart the first time I saw it. And I guess that is all I can really say when recommending *SD* to you. Don't let ADV's focus on the "naughty" side of this title sway you—this is a very sweet and innocent show, and is a lot more than the fanservice. —*shidoshi*







JoJo's Bizarre Adventure

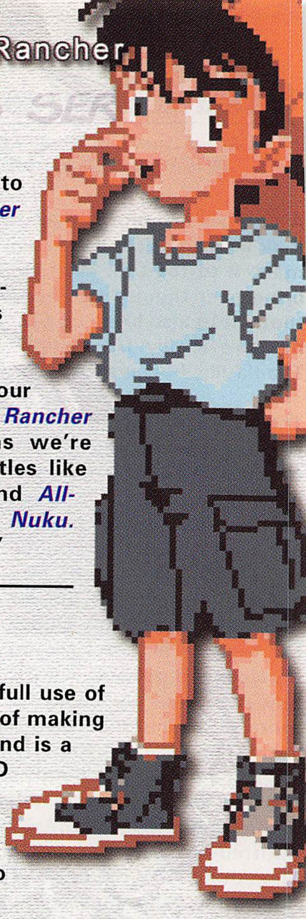
Action • OVA • Japan Only • 16+ **B+**
n/a • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Seeing as how this magazine is about video games and all, you may have noticed recently there being mentioned a video game produced by a little known company called Capcom—that game being *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*. Well, actually, if you're like me, part of the slowly dying group of people who still worship Capcom and all their 2D greatness, you probably have more than a clue as to what is going on here. But for those who don't, take my hand and let me guide you for a little while to another place, a bizarre place.

The six OAV series revolves primarily around the end of part three in the *JoJo's* saga, and has our heroes Kujo Jotarou, his grandfather Jonathon Joestar, and crew on the hunt for the mysterious vampire/stand user named Dio. The problem is, the other stand users protecting him are quite tight lipped about his whereabouts and his powers. To protect him, they are willing to take his secrets to their graves—and the graves of our heroes. Making matters worse, Kujou's mother has developed a stand of her own, an uncontrollable one that in time, will inadvertently kill its host. However, our heroes believe that if they can unlock the mystery and destroy Dio, she'll be cured. What is a stand, you ask? See, in the *JoJo's* universe, at some point in a character's life, they acquire the power to use a stand. A stand is a projection of the user's personality, which takes on a life of its own, and usually has something to do with the tarot. So, instead of the usual "two characters fighting it out like starving rabid pitbulls with porkchops tied around their necks," they let their stands do their dirty work. The battles are some of the greatest and most ingenious that I've seen in some time; the struggle between Kujo's stand, Star Platinum, and Dio's stand, the World, is so cool that I am forced to watch it over and over every time I see at. The characters themselves are great, with such personalities as Vanilla Ice, Aerosmith, R.E.O. Speedwagon, and Darbi (named after the creator's love for American musicians).

It's difficult to sum up *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* in one sitting. It's, well, a bizarre story. But if you can get your hands on a copy, I'm sure you won't be disappointed. You may even catch yourself yelling Star Platinum's battle cry—" UraraararararUra!!" Anyhow, I've gotta go—Shidoshi isn't looking, so maybe I can escape before he makes me sit through another season in *Harvest Moon 64*. —*Maurice Williams*

AF News Service


Monster Rancher

A Side of Ranch with your Monster

Last month, I talked a bit about the success that *Digimon* has seen in the US. This month, I bring you more great (...?) news. The US is currently playing host to three "let's capture cute monsters and have fun adventures" anime shows—*Pokemon*, *Digimon*, and *Monster Rancher*. Well, ADV recently announced that they picked up the rights to the home video release of *Monster Rancher*. The first two volumes will be hitting store shelves on March 13th, and the next two will be released on May 23rd. Each volume will contain three English dubbed episodes for the low, low price of just $14.98. I haven't seen *Monster Rancher* yet, but many have told me that it is the best of the three.

ADV's President John Ledford had this to say about their acquisition of *Monster Rancher*.

"We're very selective about what properties we get involved in, but this was a no-brainer. It's animated, which is the genre we're known for, so *Monster Rancher* fits in perfectly into our catalog. Coincidentally, the *Monster Rancher* opportunity presented itself just as we're expanding our children's line with titles like *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water* and *All-Purpose Multicultural Catgirl Nuku Nuku*. The timing couldn't have been better."

Gainax + March = New Series

A small tidbit of news concerning the next anime series from famed anime studio Gainax. Expected to be released in Japan in March is *Furi Kuri*, the first volume in a six-volume OAV series. Directed by Tsurumaki Kazuya, *Furi Kuri* is currently in production. This new OAV series is based off of the *Furi Kuri* manga by Ueda Hajime, which began running in February in the Japanese publication *Magazine Z*. According to reports, Gainax is making *Furi Kuri* with the DVD format very much in mind, and just like previous Gainax DVDs, this release will no doubt make full use of the format. This new trend of making anime titles with DVD in mind is a fabulous thing, as the DVD release ends up being so much better and making greater use of the format than a normal "anime to DVD" release can.

DVD ... DVD ... DVD!

A lot of DVD news this month, so bear with me if you aren't currently an owner of one of those wonderful little players. Anyhow, let's begin.

Media Blasters

Listed for release on May 23rd is the *Magic Knight Rayearth* DVD box set. Set for Region 1 and clocking at 500 minutes, the box set will retail for a SRP of $129.99. On that same day, Media Blasters will also release the first two volumes of the second season of *Magic Knight Rayearth* on VHS. Each volume will be 100 minutes in length, will retail for $24.95, and will be released in both sub and dub formats.

Where is: Elf Princess Rane!?


Ranma 1/2

Disney

Now, before we get too excited, this one is just still an unconfirmed report. On a reported list of DVD titles coming from Buena Vista in the near future is one *Princess Mononoke*, slated for May. Unless Disney is absolutely stupid, a *Princess Mononoke* DVD would no doubt contain both the star-studded English dub as well as the original Japanese vocal track with subtitles optional. If this is true, this will be the first taste that American anime fans will have with Miyazaki on DVD.

Where is: Kiki's Delivery Service!?!?

Manga Ent.

First is *Devilman*, containing two episodes and seeing release on March 28th. After that, we have *Blackjack: the Movie* and *Patlabor* Movies 1 and 2, all on April 25th. All of these discs are currently being listed with a retail price of $29.95, with no features lists yet available. April should also tentatively see three more huge DVD releases from *Manga: Castle of Cagliostro*, *Wings of Honneamise*, and *Perfect Blue*. I mean, just one of those coming out on DVD would make April a great month—but all three?

Where is: Gunbuster!?

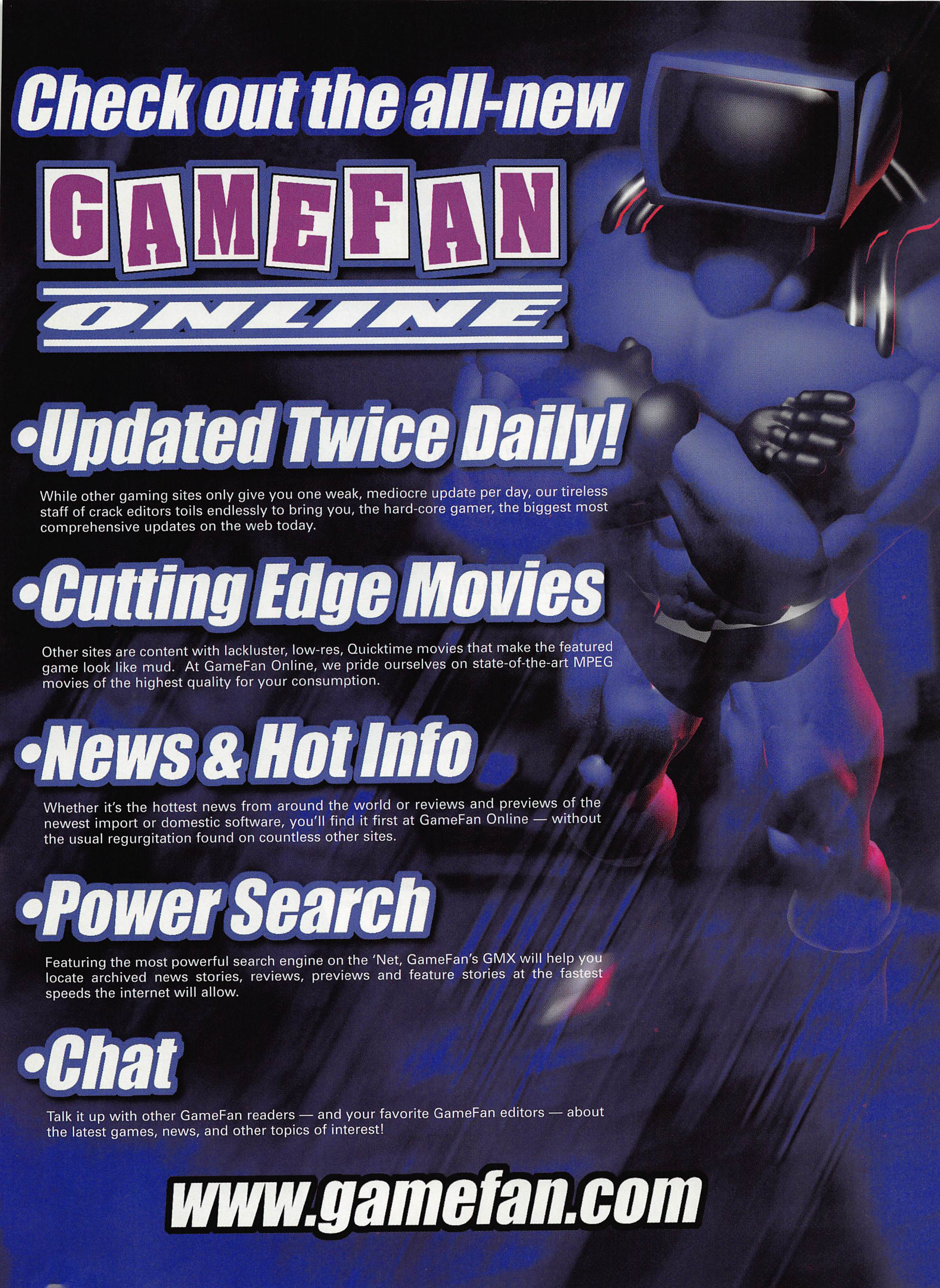
Pioneer

Ranma 1/2 fans have something to be happy for, as Pioneer will release its third box set in the way of the *Ranma 1/2* OAV DVD Collection. Collecting the entire *Ranma 1/2* OAV series, this box set should retail for a price near the *Tenchi* Ultimate Collection and should see release on April 25th. Other releases will be *Trigun* in March, and *Sol Bianca: the Legacy* in April. Both should see day and date DVD releases along with the VHS release. Finally, summer will give us, if nothing goes wrong, a *Tenchi Universe* DVD box set.

Where is: Wait for it... the Hakkenden!?!

Rhino

Why am I mentioning Rhino Video? Simple—*Transformers: the Movie* DVD! Yes, it's true, it IS coming! Rhino promises that this release will be a keeper (with retouched image quality and a remixed soundtrack), and if possible, they also want to try to throw some of the deleted scenes on the disc as well. Look for this DVD in August, as well as *G.I. Joe: the Movie* this Summer. Coooool!


Check out the all-new
GAMEFAN
ONLINE
•Updated Twice Daily!
While other gaming sites only give you one weak, mediocre update per day, our tireless staff of crack editors toils endlessly to bring you, the hard-core gamer, the biggest most comprehensive updates on the web today.
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Other sites are content with lackluster, low-res, Quicktime movies that make the featured game look like mud. At GameFan Online, we pride ourselves on state-of-the-art MPEG movies of the highest quality for your consumption.
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Hocus Pocus

codes, hints & strategies

Welcome to the pages of cheats, codes, and hints galore!!! Upon these leaves you will find all the assistance you'll need for the hottest games today. Not satisfied? Need help on another game? No problem! If you need codes or hints on any game, mail GameFan, or e-mail hocuspocus@gamefan.com. Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...

Code of the Month!

Dreamcast

Soul Reaver

Complete Cheat List!

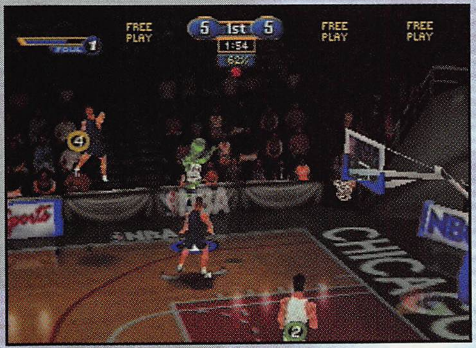
Here's a complete list of cheats for *Soul Reaver*. To access each cheat pause the game, press and hold the L and R shoulder buttons and press the following combinations:

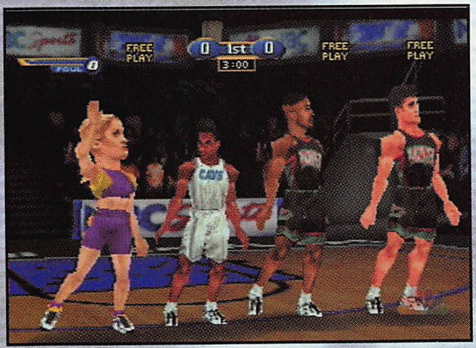
Aerial Reaver: A, →, ↑, ↑, Y, ←, ←, →, ↑
All Abilities: ↑, ↑, ↓, →, →, ←, B, →, ←, ↓
Fire Reaver: ↓, ↑, →, ↑, ↓, ←, B, →, ↓
Upgrade health to next level: →, A, ←, Y, ↑, ↓
Maximum Health Upgrade: →, B, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑
Maximum Magic Upgrade: Y, →, ↓, →, ↑, Y, ←
Open all warp gates: ↑, ↑, ↓, →, →, ←, B, →, ←, ↓
Restore Health: ↓, B, ↑, ←, ↑, ←
Restore Magic: →, →, ←, Y, →, ↓
Force Glyph: ↓, ←, Y, ↓, ↑
Kain Reaver: A, B, →, Y, ←, ←, →, ↑
Sound Glyph: →, →, ↓, B, ↑, ↑, ↓
Stone Glyph: ↓, B, ↑, ←, ↓, →, →
Sunlight Glyph: ←, B, ←, →, →, ↑, ←
Water Glyph: ↓, B, ↑, ↓, →

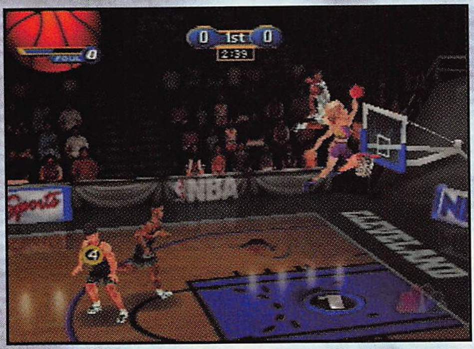




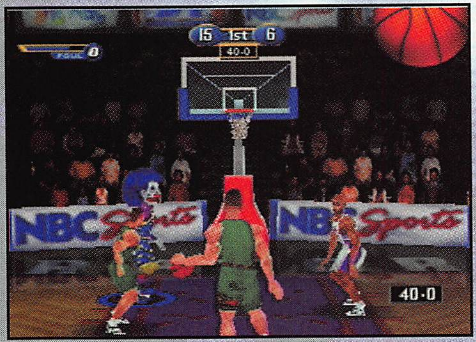
NBA on NBC: NBA Showtime Secret Characters











Here's a massive list of secret characters to add to the already-huge list; at the name entry screen, enter the name of the desired character followed by the corresponding PIN.

Alex Gilliam, Midway Game Tester	LEX 0014
Andy Eloff, Midway System Hardware	ELOFF 2181
Beth Smukowski, Midway Creative Media	BETHAN 1111
Brian LeBaron, Midway Game Tester	GRINCH 0222
Chad Edmunds, Motion-Capture Actor	CHAD 0628
Chris Skrundz, Midway Creative Media	CMSVID 0000
Clown	CRISPY 2084
Creature from the Black Lagoon	CREATR 1954
Dan Thompson, Midway Programmer	DANIEL 0604
Dave Grossman, Midway Creative Media	DAVE 1104
Eugene Geer, Midway Artist	E GEER 1105
Frankenstein's monster	FRANK 1932
Greg Cutler, Motion-Capture Actor	CUTLER 1111
Isiah Thomas, NBC Sports Announcer	THOMAS 1111
Jason Skiles, Midway Programmer	JASON 3141
Jeff Johnson, Midway Programmer	JAPPLE 6660
Jennifer Hedrick, Midway Artist	JENIFR 3333
Jennifer Hedrick, alternate uniform	JENIFR 1111
Jim Gentile, Midway Artist	GENTIL 1228
Jim Tianis, Midway Creative Media	DIMI 0619
John Root, Midway Artist	ROOT 6000
Jon Hey, Midway Sound and Music	JONHEY 8823
Kerri the female player	KERRI 0220
Kerri in alternate uniform	KERRI 1111
Large alien	BIGGY 0958
Larry Wotman, Midway Creative Media	STRAT 2112
Lia the female player	LIA 0712
Lia in alternate uniform	LIA 1111
Mark Guidarelli, Midway Programmer	GUIDO 6765
Mark Turmell, Midway Lead Programmer	TURMEL 0322
Matt Gilmore, Midway Artist	MATT G 1006
Mike Lynch, Midway System Hardware	LYNCH 3333
Nikko the Devil Dog	NIKKO 6666
Old man	OLDMAN 2001
Paul Martin, Midway PC Support	STENTR 0269
Paulo Garcia, Midway Game Tester	PAULO 0517
Pinto Horse	PINTO 1966
Pumpkin	JACKO 1031
Referee	THEREF 7777
Rob Gatson, Midway Programmer	GATSON 1111
Retro Rob	RETRO 1970
Sal DiVita, Midway Lead Artist	SAL 0201
Shawn Liptak, Programming Consultant	LIPTAK 0114
Small Alien	SMALLS 0856
Bride of Frankenstein's Monster	BRIDE 1935
The Mummy	MUMMY 1932
The Wolfman	WOLFMN 1942
Tim Bryant, Midway Artist	TIMMYB 3314
Tim Kitzrow, Midway Sports Announcer	TIMK 7785
Tim Moran, Midway Creative Media	TIMCRP 6666
White horse	HORSE 1966
Willy Morris, Motion-Capture Actor	WIL 0101
Wizard	THEWIZ 1136
Atlanta Hawks mascot	HAWK 0322
Charlotte Hornets mascot	HORNET 1105
Denver Nuggets mascot	ROCKY 0201
Houston Rockets mascot	TURBO 1111
Indiana Pacers mascot	BOOMER 0604
Minnesota Timberwolves mascot	CRUNCH 0503
New Jersey Nets mascot	SLY 6765
Phoenix Suns mascot	GORILA 0314
Seattle Sonics mascot	SASQUA 7785
Toronto Raptors mascot	RAPTOR 1020
Utah Jazz mascot	BEAR 1228

Xena Cheat Codes & Play Modes

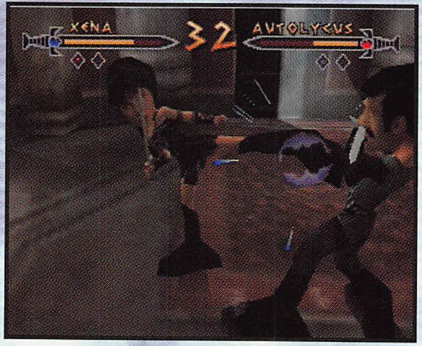
Cheat Codes

While playing a game, hold A and press any of the following combinations:

Take no damage— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Strong Punch, Strong Punch, Strong Punch, Weak Kick, Weak Kick, Weak Kick, A.
Take less damage— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Strong Punch, Strong Punch, Strong Punch, Weak Kick, Weak Kick, Weak Kick, Z trigger.
One-hit kills— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Strong Punch, Strong Punch, Strong Punch, Weak Kick, Weak Kick, Weak Kick, R shoulder.
Invisible fighter— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Strong Kick, Strong Kick, Strong Kick, Weak Kick, Z trigger.
Invisible fighter and opponent— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Strong Kick, Strong Kick, Strong Kick, Weak Kick, A.
Polygon fighters— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Strong Punch, Strong Punch, A.
Small fighters— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Weak Punch, Strong Punch, Strong Kick, Weak Kick, A.
Big head mode— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Z.
Big feet mode— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, R.
Snow mode— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Strong Punch, Strong Punch, Z.
Slippery stages— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Weak Punch, Weak Punch, Weak Punch, Weak Kick, Weak Kick, Weak Kick, A.
Red nose— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Weak Punch, Weak Punch, A.
Green nose— →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Weak Punch, Weak Punch, R shoulder.
Purple →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, Weak Punch, Weak Punch, Z.

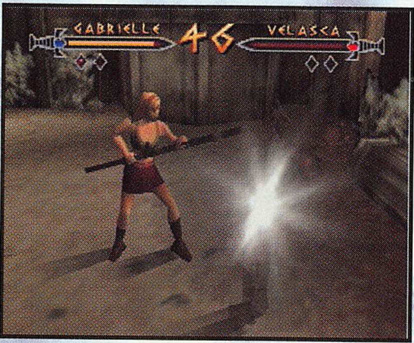
Play Modes

Play as Despair—At the main menu, press →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →.
Play as Bunny Despair—At the main menu, press → (2), ← (2), →, →, →, ←, ←, ←, →, C-Left, C-Up, C-Right, C-Down.
Titan mode—At the main menu, press → (2), ← (2), →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, C-Up, C-Down, C-Up, C-Down.
Fight Gabrielle instead of Hope—At the main menu, press →, →, ←, ←, →, ←, →, C-Left(4).





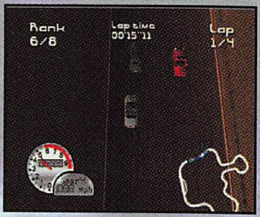






Roadsters





Cheat Codes

At the character selection screen, enter one of the following codes and rename any character. When entered, the word "congratulations" will be spoken.

All classes—Gimme-ALL
$250,000—fastBUCKS
$1,000,000—EasyMoney
High-pitched voices—Smurfing
Helicopter view—Chopper
Small cars—Car-Radio
Hovercraft cars—Skywalker
Big tires—BigWheels
High-resolution mode—Extra-rez



Toy Story 2

Unlock All Levels

At the screen that says "Buzz Lightyear to the Rescue," press Up, Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down. If the code's entered correctly, a sheep will make a "baa" sound.

Vigilante 8

Enter one of the following passwords to acquire the desired cheat:

Rapid fire—RAPID_FIRE
Super missiles—BLAST_FIRE
Faster cars—MORE_SPEED
Heavier cars—GO_RAMMING
Fast action—QUICK_PLAY
Attract enemies—UNDER_FIRE
Slow-motion mode—GO_SLOW_MO
No enemies in arcade mode—HOME_ALONE
No gravity—NO_GRAVITY
High suspensions—JACK_IT_UP
Big wheels—GO_MONSTER
No wheel attachment icons—DRIVE_ONLY
View all ending sequences—LONG_MOVIE
Same cars in multi-player—MIXES_CARS

GameShark Codes

GAMESHARK
INTERACT

PlayStation

40 Winks

Ruff-Infinite Zs
800b06ac03e7

Ruff-Infinite Moons
800b06a803e7

Ruff-Infinite RTs
800b06b403e7

Ruff-Infinite Lives
800b06ae03e7

Infinite Cogs
800b06aa03e7

Infinite Furbys
800b06b60063

Infinite Air
8002b8ce2400

Infinite Costume Time
8002c4522400

Have All Dream Keys
8009059cffff

Have All Dream Keys
50000c020000

Have All Dream Keys
8009059cffff

All Levels Unlocked
500002020000

All Levels Unlocked
80090596ffff

Have All Winks
500003020000
8009058cffff

Disney's Mulan Animated Storybook

Infinite Rope
d0033fc68fb1
301aa9700019

Dukes Of Hazzard

Infinite Body Damage
d00570140630
800570162400

Infinite Tire Damage
d0056f8c0074
80056f8e2400

Infinite Items On Pickup
d00563b006f4
800563b22400

Infinite Time
d0066ccc0414
80066cce2400

Dune 2000

Infinite Spice
800e091cffff

Max Spice
800e091c967f
800e091e0098

Building Structures Costs Nothing
800e062cffff

Instant Build Structures
800e06325a00

Building Units Costs Nothing
800e063cffff

Instant Build Units
800e06425a00

Instant Upgrade
800e06e259ff

Fighting Force 2

Infinite Health
d00b32ac2d24

Infinite Health
8011724403fc

Max Money
d00b32ac2d24

Max Money
800cdc40ffff

Infinite Rage Meter (upon fill-up)
80070f362400

Infinite Ammo - All Guns
80073b862400

Have All Keycards
800ce2840101
800ce2860101

Infinite Continues
d00b32ac2d24
800cdc3c0009

Start Game in Cheat Mode
800cb72c0002

Hyper Mode
800cbf5e0001

Invincible After First Knockdown
8006e89a2400

Konami Arcade Classics Yie Ar Kung Fu

Infinite Lives P1
800f0f18020b
800f0f48020b

Nintendo 64

Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling

Headless Bowler
8007db770005

Geomon's Great Adventure

Infinite Coins P1 (After First Boss)
8119adee03e7

Infinite Gold P1
8108828603e7

Infinite Health P1
800882840003

Infinite Lives P1
800882830003

Open All Levels
50002d020000

Open All Levels
810882aa0303

Infinite Gold P2
8108829003e7

Infinite Lives P2
8008828d0003

Infinite Health P2
8008828e0003

Namco Museum 64

Enable Code (must be on)
f1091f941000

Pac Man Infinite Credits
800a88170063

Pac Man Infinite Lives P1
800bbe230004

Pac Man Infinite Lives P2
800bbe270004

Pac Man Eat All Ghosts All The Time
810a87600000
810a87620000
810a878c0000
810a878e0000
810a87b80000
810a87ba0000
810a87e40000
810a87e60000

Ms. Pac Man Infinite Credits
800bbe4b0063

Ms. Pac Man Infinite Lives P1
800bbe230004

Ms. Pac Man Infinite Lives P2
800bbe270004

Ms. Pac Man Eat All Ghosts All The Time
810bc1000000
810bc1020000
810bc12c0000
810bc12e0000
810bc1580000
810bc15a0000
810bc1840000
810bc1860000

Galaga Infinite Credits
800d76a40063

Galaga Infinite Lives (both players)
800d75100002

Galaxian Infinite Credits
800cd3d00063

Galaxian Infinite Lives
800cd3ad0003

Pole Position Infinite Time
8010a2430063

Dig-Dug Infinite Credits
800fe67e0063

Dig-Dug Infinite Lives P1
800fe7090002

Dig-Dug Infinite Lives P2
800fe76b0004

Ready 2 Rumble

Infinite Health P1
810d9f780000
810d9f7a0064

No Health P1
810d9f780000
810d9f7a0000

Infinite Stamina P1
810d9f7c0000
810d9f7e0064

No Stamina P1
810d9f7c0000
810d9f7e0000

Max 'RUMBLE' P1
810d9f840000
810d9f860030

Never 'RUMBLE' P1
810d9f840000
810d9f860000

Infinite Health P2
810da7900000
810da7920064

No Health P2
810da7900000
810da7920000

Infinite Stamina P2
810da7940000
810da7960064

No Stamina P2
810da7940000
810da7960000

Max 'RUMBLE' P2
810da7a00000
810da7a20030

Never 'RUMBLE' P2
810da7a00000
810da7a20000

Infinite Time
810e75960e10

Have All Characters
5000125c0000
810ec9380000
5000125c0000
810ec93a0003

Infinite Money
810ec932ffff

Road Rash 64

Infinite Cash
800d6a7a00ff

Always Place 1st P1
810d78560000

Infinite Strength Bike P1
811b8a3842f0
811b8a3c42f0

Infinite Health P1
811bfe104489
811bfe128000

Infinite Strength Bike P2
811b92a042f0
811b92a442f0

Infinite Health P2
811c04004489
811c04028000

Have All Tracks
810a77d60001

Scooter Mode
810a77d40001

Cop Mode
810a77d80001

Debug Info On Screen
810a77c80001

Start With Club
810a77da0001

Roadsters

Enable Code
ee0000000000

Infinite Cash
800babf50010

Quick Win
d00c20010001
800c20010005
800c20030005
d00c20030001

Max Money
810babf47fff
810babf6ffff

Enable Trophies Cheat
8008f8410010

Enable Big Wheels Cheat
8008f8410040

Enable Big Wheels and Trophies
8008f8410050

Enable Skywalker Cheat
8008f8410080

Enable Skywalker And Trophies
8008f8410090

Enable Car Radio Cheat
8008f8400001

Enable Chopper Cheat
8008f8400002

Enable Chopper And Car Radio
8008f8400003

Space Invaders 64

Infinite Lives
800b51dd0005

Infinite Points
810b51e2ffff

Always Have Vertical Burst
810b51de0104

Always Have Horizontal Right
810b51de0204

Always Have Horizontal Left
810b51de0304

Always Have Diagonal Burst
810b51de0404

Infinite Shield
810b51b60001

Dead or Alive 2

Cerberus' Basic Combo Primer

Tecmo's *DoA2* has taken GameFan by storm. The game's always in someone's DC, and it's a battle just trying to get a round or two in. I've compiled some combos for you here that any beginner can pull off, that you might avoid the fate of UMF (note: some combos require that the first hit be a counter hit, or the last hit or two miss). We'll be back soon with even more combos. Notice that, like *Soul Calibur*, it's very, very difficult to pull off true combos. In *Soul Calibur*, your opponent could modify his axis mid-air to avoid aerial hits; in *DoA2*, an opponent can reverse a combo if he reverses with the correct height. It's kind of unfair, but that's life. Just think of it like combo breakers from *KI*...

Ayane



Begin the combo by pressing ➔ + Kick...



Quickly press Punch...



Punch...



Punch for three quick hits...



Repeat to get three more hits.

Genfu



This one is super easy—press ↑ + Punch...



Quickly press Punch two more times...



Press ↑ + Punch yet again...

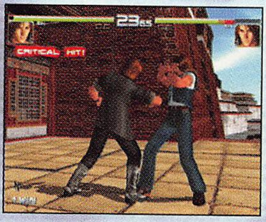


Punch...



Punch for a final hit.

Hayate



Begin by attacking with ➔ + Punch...



Before your opponent recovers, press ↗ + Kick...



Press Punch twice...





↓ + Kick twice to earn two more hits.

Jan Lee



Press ↗ + Punch to stun your opponent...



Continue with ➔ + Kick...



↗ + Kick...



Use Jan's flurry Punch combo for three more hits.



Kasumi



Daze your opponent with an elbow, → + Punch...

Now press →, → + Punch...

While still stunned, jump forward...

Press Punch on the way down...

Attack with Kasumi's quad punch combo (Punch times 4).

Tina



Press ↗ + Punch for a quick stun...

A hop kick (↗ + Kick) will send your opponent up...

Now press Punch...

Punch...

Kick for three more hits. Easy, no?

Helena



Press → + Kick, Punch...

To get a kick to the groin followed by a punch...

Immediately press ↖ + Kick to knock your opponent into the air...

Press Punch repeatedly to finish the combo.



Advertiser's Index

Pokémon Stadium: Round Three

Can't wait to get your hands on the first *Pokémon Stadium* this March? Well, our lucky friends in Japan have already received two versions of this Pikachu battler, and are about to get another. Word is that a third *Pokémon Stadium* will be released this fall, with Expansion Pak support—and will be fully compatible with *Pokémon Gold* and *Silver*! Will Nintendo bring this potential cash cow over to our shores just in time for the holidays? My Magic Eight Ball points to "Yes!"

The Simpsons Return to the World of Games

Here's a hot rumor right off the shelves—a source at Fox Interactive recently hinted that Bart, Homer, and Lisa will all be on their way back to the world of video games. Back in the 8- and 16-bit days of gaming, cartridges based on "The Simpsons" used to sell like hotcakes... so it seems only obvious that Fox would want to bring their hot commodity back, in fully-rendered 3D glory!

Watch Video Tape on Your PlayStation 2?

ON24, an online investment group, published a very peculiar tidbit in their audio investment alert outlining the future of Sony and the PlayStation 2... Not only did the group confirm Sony's plans to open a full Broadband network for the PS2 by early 2001, it also went on to hint at a potential digital video tape player add-on for the next-generation console. Is this yet another 'piece of the pie' of Sony's set-top box goals? It sure sounds like it!

The 'Lion King' Put to Sleep

Four years ago, Nintendo of Japan announced it had secured the rights to "Junguru Taitei," known here in the States as "Kimba the White Lion". We saw some images off a video, but after that, we heard nothing more.

Well, a source close to Nintendo tells GameFan that the big cat's finally been put down. The game wasn't progressing as Nintendo would've liked, and when push came to shove, the plug was pulled. It's sad, really; "Kimba" was such a cool cartoon when I was a kid, and I'd always kept hope alive that I'd see it again.

First Details on Ready 2 Rumble—*PS2-Style*

Midway's confirmed that the next version of the boxing sensation *Ready 2 Rumble* will launch with the PlayStation 2 in the U.S. this fall. The Dreamcast and other platforms are also rumored to receive ports of the sequel, but a final list of supported consoles has not been issued. We are definitely ready to rumble with *R2R2*...

Midway also confirmed its plans for the oft-rumored *Ready 2 Rumble* wrestling title, which is expected to be officially unveiled at this year's E3.

Capcom Announces Two New DC Fighters

Well, hand it to Capcom yet again—the company knows how to milk the fighters for boatloads of cash. The latest announcements are of *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike* and *Justice Schools 2* (*Rival Schools* in the U.S.) for the DC. Not only will both games be released this year, but (along with the upcoming *MVC2* and *Power Stone 2*) both will feature Internet play, as well. Yes, the old joy of battling opponents via phone (which was actually realized on Genesis with XBAND) will soon become a reality in Japan.

Two New PlayStation 2 Titles from Square!

Square of Japan's announced two new PlayStation 2 titles: *All Star Professional Wrestling Ring* and *Gekikuukan Pro Baseball: The End of the Century 1999*. Square's wrestling title's rumored to surface sometime this spring, and will feature professional wrestlers from Japan's pro rasslin' circuits; their baseball title's expected to ship in March, and will feature an unprecedented amount of speech, with an insane number of character animations (3500!). Now where's *Tobal 3*?

Resident Evil *Scratched* for Game Boy Color?

Sources close to the *Resident Evil* Game Boy Color project recently hinted that the survival horror classic might indeed be scratched. But here's the good news—the source also mentioned that a better-looking Game Boy Advance version would replace the current handheld conversion. Word's come out of Japan that Nintendo's next GB may even surpass the Sega Saturn in polygon-pushing power... does this mean we might see a full 3D *RE* in our hands in the near future? I sure hope so!

More Namco Dreamcast Rumblings

Namco of Japan, which is quickly becoming a staple of each month's OS, has once again leaked further details on upcoming Dreamcast projects. The latest rumored Dreamcast game: a new addition to the *Time Crisis* series! It's unknown whether the Dreamcast version will be a spiced-up *Time Crisis 2*, the just-released *Crisis Zone*, or perhaps a compilation of the two; Namco's expected to announce the oft-discussed Dreamcast game just days before the Tokyo Game Show this March. Now, how about a *Tekken Tag* announcement instead?

Halo Confirmed for the PlayStation 2

It's been confirmed that Bungie Software's upcoming PC combat game, *Halo*, will also be making its way onto the PlayStation 2. It appears that the game (once a coin-tossed rumor with Bungie's oft-discussed potential PS2 port, *Oni*) will arrive toward the end of this year's holiday season, and will be published by Rockstar Games.

Take Two's First PlayStation 2 Games Revealed

Take Two Interactive has announced the first details and titles of their upcoming PlayStation 2 projects, *Midnight Club: Street Racing* and *Getaway*. Both games will be developed by Angel Studios (yes, the same folks that made *Ken Griffey Jr.* and *Resident Evil 2* for the N64), and are scheduled to launch this fall.

Here's a short description of each game provided by Take Two:

- *Midnight Club: Street Racing* is a game based on illegal street racing; players drive performance-enhanced cars around busy city streets until they're challenged by members of the elusive *Midnight Club*, then they race at breakneck speeds through the city. *Midnight Club: Street Racing*'s set in some incredibly detailed, realistic three-dimensional models of the world's greatest cities, and will feature single- and multi-player modes, many different vehicles, and some of the greatest car tuning shops in the world.

- *Getaway* is an open-plan racing game in which players have to deliver contraband goods across borders while evading police and other smuggling operations. *Getaway*'s set in a variety of rural environments, with an incredible new panoramic perspective; the game has a phenomenal physics engine to faithfully re-create the speed and sensation of tearing across the country, through farms, fences and forests, while trying to outrun a variety of enemies. *Getaway* also introduces fully-interactive, supporting non-player characters to the driving genre, which the player can use to distract and attack his pursuers.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

With the dawn of the Internet Age, there's a lot of readily accessible information out there, but how much of it is true? How much of it is regurgitated speculation conjured up from our depraved minds while writing Other Stuff? In this tempest of rumors, amidst this whirlwind of false information, there needs to be a calm in the middle of the storm... a place where we can set the record straight.

Now we love Capcom fighting games just as much as the next guy. *Cyberbots, Darkstalkers,* and *Rival Schools* were all highly underrated. *Street Fighter II* was Eggo's world for a long time. Heck, some of us even championed *Plasma Sword* and *JoJo's*, but what is the deal with all this hype about *Tech Romancer*? Are we the only sane game players left? Outlandish statements such as "*Kikaioh* [the Japanese name] injects a lot more fun into the gameplay than games like *Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram*," or "the sleeper fighting hit of the year." What the hell is wrong with you people?! *Tech Romancer* is an average fighting game at best—definitely not one of Capcom's finer works. The game doesn't deserve to be in the same sentence as *VOOT*, let alone be hailed as better in any way. Sleeper fighting game of the year? Perhaps you might want to reserve that distinction for truly worthy candidates like *Spawn, Power Stone 2,* or *Guilty Gear 2.* Almost every preview or review out there spends a good portion of the time raving about the mechs and atmosphere. But people, since when did atmosphere make a game? A familiar theme such as mechs can make a game more appealing, but atmosphere does **not** make a poor game great. It's still a poor game, no matter how much gloss you put on it. Don't be fooled by the hype.



Fury's Tales Of The Hardcore

Why would any sane human being pay nearly a thousand dollars for a DVD player? How about a hundred bucks for a near-mint copy of *Radiant Silvergun*? How many home consoles do you own that date prior to 1990? If any of these questions pertain to you directly, if in the past year or so you've blown tons of cash on useless items that wind up sitting on your shelves like a bunch of dust-caked museum pieces, if you've got more than five bids running on eBay consecutively, if you've ever beaten *Magician Lord* on a single set of lives—consider yourself hardcore... these are your stories.

Want your own hardcore tale of ninja gaming or purchasing stupidity featured in this column? Simply e-mail your buddy Fury and if you're mental enough, if you have the brass to blow an entire paycheck (or two... Sony Vega, anyone?) on a slew of useless goods that only the insane editors at GameFan could appreciate, come forth from under your rock and deliver a tale of hardcore at its best! And remember, stories that involve any cheat codes (up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A, start) will be tossed to the wayside faster than Cerberus on a blind date. Let the madness begin!!

If you think you're hard-core enough to be featured in the hallowed pages of GF, here's the address to remember: ***fury@gamefan.com***, subject line "hardcore."

(Be sure to include jpegs of yourself and/or friends to accompany the stories. Makes it easier to laugh at you!)





$70.00

HARDCORE METER

SUBJECT: George Ngo (aka Eggo)

USELESS ITEM: *Final Fantasy* Cactrot Blowup Pal

NUMBER OF USES: undetermined (due to an unforeseen blowout in Cactrot's leg... thanks, Fury!)



$950.00

HARDCORE METER

SUBJECT: Tyrone Rodriguez (aka Cerberus)

USELESS ITEM: Panasonic Portable DVD Player

NUMBER OF USES: 2.5 (...and one of those occurences was just to see if it still worked.)

Chris Rausch, Designer, Neversoft **Born: 9.11.74** **Alias/Secret Identity: Team Chicken**

My Previous Games include:
Grand Slam (PSX, PC, Sat), *Freakboy R.I.P.* (N64), *Golden Nugget* (N64), *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* (PSX)

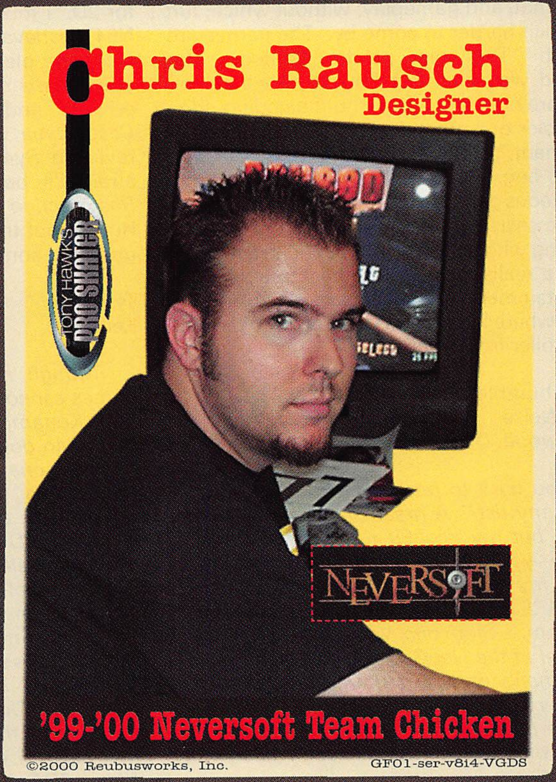
My Current Project is: A really cool one.

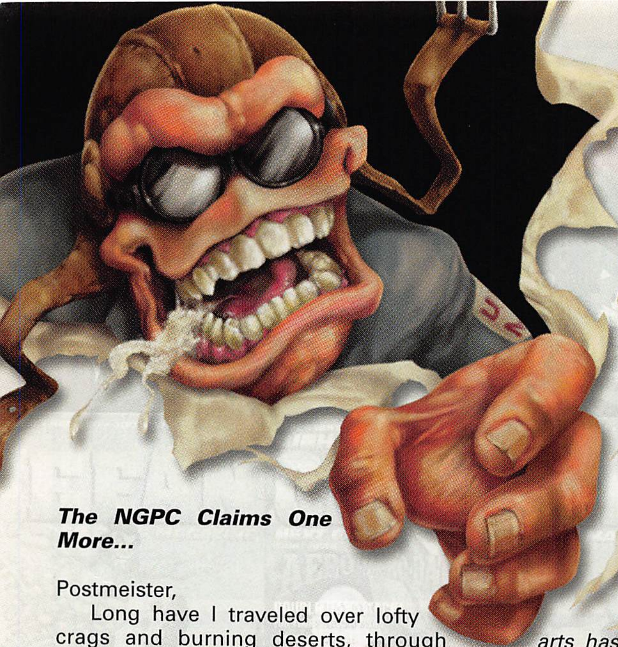
Hobbies: Sports (watching my beloved Angels and Ducks lose year after year), finding new ways to fall off my skateboard, hanging out with my family and friends, playing video games (of course), seeing new bands, and recording voice work (music videos, games, etc.).

Favorite games of all time: *Tron, Star Wars, Skate or Die, Excitebike, Thunder Blade, Quake, NFL Blitz,* geez... this could go on forever.

Current Favorites: *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* (plug, plug), *Wrestlemania 2000, Ready 2 Rumble.*

About me: Well, let's see, I came into the industry in '93, in the Q.A. dept. at Virgin Interactive. I did the ol' ladder climb there for about a year, and became a lead designer. Over the years, I watched the company go through more changes than my 1-year-old's diaper. But, through the five health plans, four buildings, and about fifteen desk locations, I made a lot of really good friends in the industry. It seems to me that about 90% of the industry passed through Virgin at one time or another; I came to Neversoft in Feb. '99 to work on *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*. Man, was that a dream come true! Finally, a skating game! Meeting/working with one of my junior high/high school idols was definitely cool, too. I really tested my wife's patience with my crazy hours during crunch times; anyone in games knows exactly what I'm talking about. Anyway, I'm looking forward to an excellent Y2K. See ya!





THE POSTMEISTER

Write to me, I'm running for president!!!
The Postmeister
6301 DeSoto Avenue Suite E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

The NGPC Claims One More...

Postmeister,

Long have I traveled over lofty crags and burning deserts, through nigh-impenetrable jungle and a broken water main in downtown Cleveland, so that I might kneel at your feet and implore you to tell me if I've advanced along The Way. Here is my tale...

I own a Dreamcast and a PlayStation. Before them, a SNES, NES and Game Boy. My first-ever videogame was *Asteroids*; the vector graphics arcade version, played when I was but a lad. I lived—and reveled—in the "glory days" of gaming. With the advent of 32-bit tech, amidst ever more complex games, I began to lose something. The eye candy was grand, the sounds were so good I began buying game soundtracks. And yet, something was missing.

Two weeks ago, I bought a NeoGeo Pocket Color. And I felt as if I had just been awakened. I played *Samurai Shodown 2*, *SNK vs. Capcom*, and *Metal Slug*—and rediscovered what I'd been missing: Fun! Just that, and gameplay; without which, fun is much harder to come by. The games are 16-bit. The color palette, limited. The sound, well, bad. But they play like a dream, and are honestly fun, without bleeding-edge graphics or a great deal of "paperwork management," a-la *Final Fantasy VIII*.

I beg, do not misunderstand me. Righteous games exist on the PlayStation and Dreamcast, and I do enjoy them. However... playing with sprites is something I've missed, where realism can take a back seat to plain entertainment. Have I advanced? Am I closer to where I may one day attempt to take the controller from your fist?

Your humble acolyte,
Joe Welke
Lakewood, OH

You wish to one day take the controller from my fist? A great many masters have tried, but my Post-Fu fist is smooth to the bone—you are not ready to snatch the pad from my hand yet, Grasshopper. However, you ARE on the path toward complete Postal wisdom. Step one was realizing the sex appeal of the NeoGeo Pocket Color; this is a real man's gaming system, with hard core games that appeal to our unique sensibilities. These titles recall a simpler time, when the focus of video games was not on the number of polygons, texture maps or pre-rendered CGI sequences... but rather, on blowing your mind with games that played flawlessly and entertained for hours. All this, in a bite-sized morsel you can take with you anywhere... SNK truly does love us.

Your advancement in the Postal arts has taken you down a treacherous, winding road... and the NeoGeo Pocket Color is but a first step in your journey to enlightenment. You have started out on the right foot, though! With excellent nutrition (including a diet high in preservatives and frozen goods, eliminating canned meats of any kind), and the diligent training of both body and spirit, one day you may pass the seven trials to meet me on the peaks of gaming wisdom, in a battle for the coveted title of Post-Fu Grandmaster. It is a task none have completed; but with NGPC in hand, you may have what it takes. Game on, young acolyte... and remember: True mastery lies within!

Will Konami Resurrect Dracula In 2-D?

Posty,

2D is dead. I am a lost gamer searching for 2D. I must have a 2D *Castlevania*. The N64 *Castlevania* games are rotten. Would someone please wake Konami up? Would you please call upon your mighty Postal powers and force Konami to make a *Castlevania* worthy of the name? I just revisited *Symphony of the Night*, and I'm afraid I'll be disappointed with the new *Resurrection* (although the pics look good). How about trashing the 3D engine and resurrecting some 2D gameplay, Konami?

Ty Keller
Kent, OH

Though my influence in the world of games cannot be underestimated, I'm afraid that Konami has resisted my persistent threats to do them bodily harm, refusing to develop one of those tasty, hand-crafted Castlevania *gems we all love so much. Seems the company believes there's no money in 2D anymore... and looking at the mediocre sales of their shockingly delicious* Symphony of the Night*, they might be right. This company is making all of their money on "interactive music" titles for the arcade, and their 3D titles sell well, so what's the incentive to lovingly and painstakingly hand-craft another 2D* Dracula *epic? Unfortunately, the proof is in the rancid, month-old pudding here, folks... even if every hard-core gamer buys a 2D* Castlevania *game, that's still only a fraction of the game market—and Konami's aiming for a much thicker slice of the gaming pie nowadays.*

We at GameFan will continue to actively campaign for more 2D titles in the vein of the classics, but as more and more companies make the move toward the third dimension, and as more gamers start demanding that they do so, the rarer those amazing hand-drawn masterpieces of yesteryear will become. Soon, they'll be extinct... all in the name of money. We will keep trying to create new hardcore gamers out of each generation that joins the gaming hobby, but the new breed has been raised on polygons... and they do not know the beauty and grace that 2D can provide. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink—and while you and I may have an unquenchable thirst for the second dimension, we are a breed that is quickly becoming extinct, as new gamers join the fray without any knowledge of the "good old days." Weep for the industry... we toil in the twilight of 2D gaming!

The Haunting Strains Of The Undead

Hey Posty,

I am a huge fan of *Castlevania*'s music. I decided to do something about it, so I went to an importer on the internet and ordered an album. The problem is, I thought it would be re-recorded stuff with real bands. Well, it was actually recorded right off of the SNES and Game Boy. I know that versions of these songs exist featuring real bands—I have heard them. Is there any way of knowing what you're getting before you order from an import shop? Do you know the titles of any great *Castlevania* music CDs off the top of your head? And finally, what are the chances of a 2D *Castlevania* on the Game Boy Color?

Thanks,
Mike Tate

It seems that the vampire slaying classics weigh heavily on the minds of Post-Fu students everywhere this month... and rightly so. But among all Castlevania *fans, the universally accepted truth is that very few game franchises can rival, let alone exceed, the consistently amazing soundtracks that Konami's musicians have orchestrated over the years. But you must be educated when selecting a soundtrack on import, because as Little Man Tate has learned the hard way, it's tough to know what you're getting before the package arrives. There are plenty of* Castlevania *soundtracks out there to muddy the waters, too... from straight transfers of the in-game music, to re-mixed techno versions, all the way down to symphonic editions recorded by a complete orchestra.*

Typically, the name of the CD itself will tell you what type of soundtrack you're get-

ting. The word "Remix" speaks for itself... these are the original game tracks, digitally remixed and sampled by a variety of musicians. An "Orchestral," or "Arranged" version refers to a CD with tracks from the game which have been recorded by a symphony orchestra, and are typically the most popular renditions of game music... for obvious reasons. It's pretty tough for a PCM chip to rival the blistering aural assault of the London Philharmonic. "Original Soundtrack" is the term usually used to let you know that you're buying a bare-bones, straight-from-the-game audio CD. When in doubt, ask a few online soundtrack retailers... it's their job to know these things. For my money, though, it's real tough to beat the Symphony Of The Night *soundtrack.!*

As for a new Castlevania *for the diminutive giant, Game Boy Color, there's been no announcements from Konami about one. Of course, you can still play the oldies but goodies on your new colored handheld, and the Super GameBoy codes will colorize it... but as I already told our friend Joe, Konami doesn't seem real intent on keeping the 2D franchise on life support.*

Gaming Goes Underground

Greetings from the city of Mud, deep below the earth's crust. My name is Crystania and I wish to ask Sir Postmeister a few questions.

1. How might a ground-dweller, such as myself, obtain the original *D* for Saturn?
2. Is the sun real, or merely a myth conjured up to frighten us?
3. Rumor has it that Nintendo's Dolphin will be released before the PlayStation 2. Is this true?
4. Sir Postmeister, men with your dashing good looks are considered gods in our female-only society.
5. I have played Final Fantasy 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Where is number four?

Crystania
The City Of Mud

Ahh, a fellow cave dweller! Though it took time for me to acclimate myself to my dank, cavernous abode, I know realize that I could make my home nowhere else. It sounds as though your little society could use a visit from the master of Post-Fu... and perhaps one day, I will make your peoples' dream a reality, gracing your presence with my rapier-like wit, keen intellect, ripped physique and flawless oral hygiene. But for now, a few answers will have to suffice... because that's why you came, and that's why I'm here.

1. If I've said it once, I've said it a couple of times... it's all about eBay when you're looking for those hard-to-reach items. As of this writing, there are four copies of this game up for auction... some going for as low as $7.00 hard currency! Looks like that's your best bet. Beware the evil eBay bug, though—if you're bitten, you may find yourself spending countless hours staring slack-jawed at auction listings, spending all your hard-earned cheddar on items you don't need. Just ask ECM and online editor, Hi-Fi...

2. The mythical sun is very real, and its scorching rays have been known to turn many Southern California women into leathery-looking Sea Hags when exposed to their drying effects for too long. And trust me when I tell you, a Sea Hag is a frightening thing, indeed!

3. There is no truth to it. Such rumor-mongering is hardly becoming a mud-person of your stature!

4. Though this is not so much a question as a statement of fact, it serves as incentive for me to schedule a trip to the City of Mud as soon as possible. Actually, I have two tickets to your underground paradise; I've packed my bags, and I'll be leaving tonight...

5. I have it—and I'm thinking of putting it up for auction on eBay...



Marian Churchland e-mailed us this fine rendition of the Grandia crew poised for action. Good work, Marian... keep 'em coming!



***Final Fantasy** weighs heavily on the mind of Kelly Adams, who mailed in this anime-inspired art, with her compliments.*

Games Being Sent To An Early Grave?

Post-Fu master, I was wondering what's up with the graveyard section of GameFan. The only games that it shows are the early 32-bit games. They should show the classic, the 8- and 16-bit games, like *Zelda: Adventures of Link, Castlevania: Simon's Quest, Metroid, Master Blaster, Rygar, Ghosts 'N Goblins, Strider*, and *Sword of Vermillion*. These are the games that bring back my fondest memories. These are the games that I lived for, the games that grabbed ahold of me and took me to a different time, a different place. Playing these games was like reading a good book (*Lord of the Rings*), with you as the main character. These are the games that started it all. Sure, Atari was the first, but not until the NES did video games come alive for me. It seems like people have forgotten the true roots of video games; hopefully GameFan has not. GameFan was the first video game magazine that I became loyal to, (except Nintendo Power, because it was the only mag in the '80s) and I have collected every issue since Vol.1, Issue 8. GameFan was my main source of reading material throughout high school. So if you could, pass this along through GameFan and hopefully we will see some true classics brought back from the grave.

Richard Gibbs
Via the Internet

Over the years, the hallowed soil of The Graveyard has been tread by a great many games... but the sole requirement for their presence was never their age. Many titles go to the graveyard at a very young age, having never tasted the cold steel of a game store's shelf. We resurrect games for our Graveyard section that we feel were overlooked, never received the respect they deserved, and in some cases, were never even released for public consumption. It isn't an excuse for us to cover old ground by digging up the classics, it's a shrine to unheralded titles we want to bring to your attention. We are hard-core, there's no doubt about it... but GameFan is all about what's new and hot, and though we love to reminisce about the "good old days" and recount past battles, both won and lost, we know that we live in the Y2K, and people want to know what delights await them in the new millennium, not what they left behind in the last one. There are plenty of "classics" fansites on the Internet that serve this purpose better than The Graveyard ever could.

Even A Spaz Needs A Little Love...

Sup Posty!

I don't have much of a rant but rather a compliment. Tell me, who has been doing this incredible cover art for your magazine? I mean, I just went into work one day (Babbage's, mind you), and here was a magazine with this gorgeous *Fear Effect* drawing on it. I mean here it was, this magazine with a beautiful HAND DRAWN cover amongst all of these other magazines with CG covers of upcoming products and even one with a celebrity on it. Thanks so much for such a great mag, and PLEASE keep the awesome covers coming!

Jon
Via the Internet

Our covers are crafted by the lovely and talented Patrick Spaziante, lovingly known as "Spaz" among the art department here at GameFan HQ. Not only are his graphical stylings easy on the eyes, but the guy is known for his ability to create some seriously mind-bending covers in world record-breaking times. His graphite gymnastics are renowned among Sonic The Hedgehog fans, as he has been drawing that book for Archie Comics for years (which granted him the ability to create the best Sonic Adventure cover the world has ever seen for last year's June issue). He will be thrilled to hear that you're enjoying his work!

or questions call us on our **INFORMATION LINE**

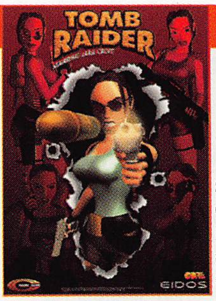
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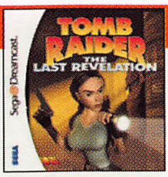
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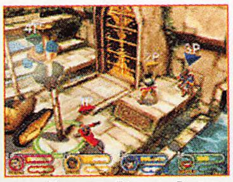


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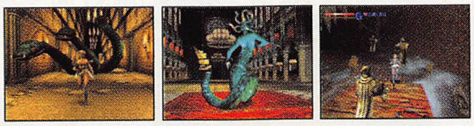


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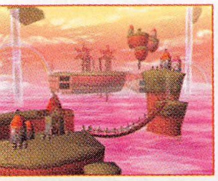




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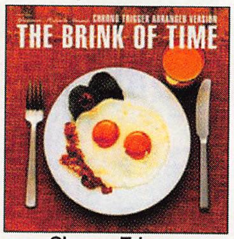
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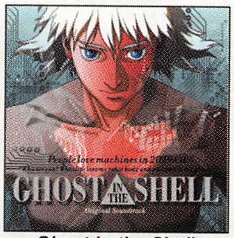
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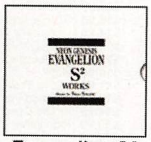
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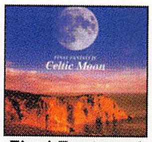
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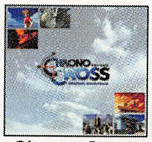
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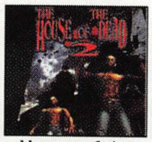
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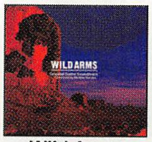
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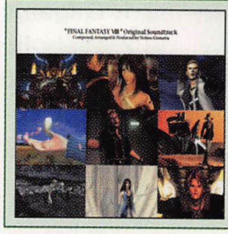


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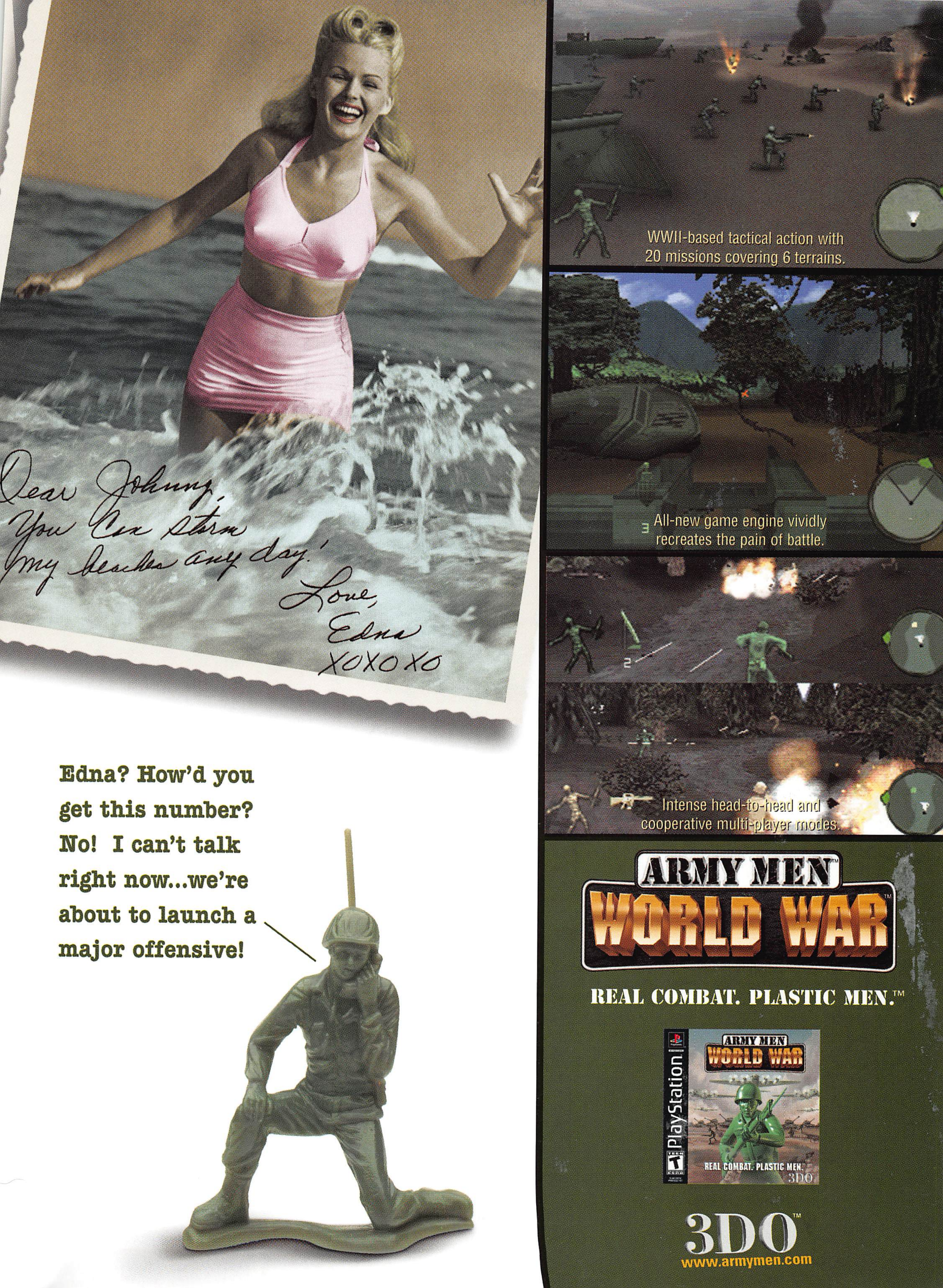
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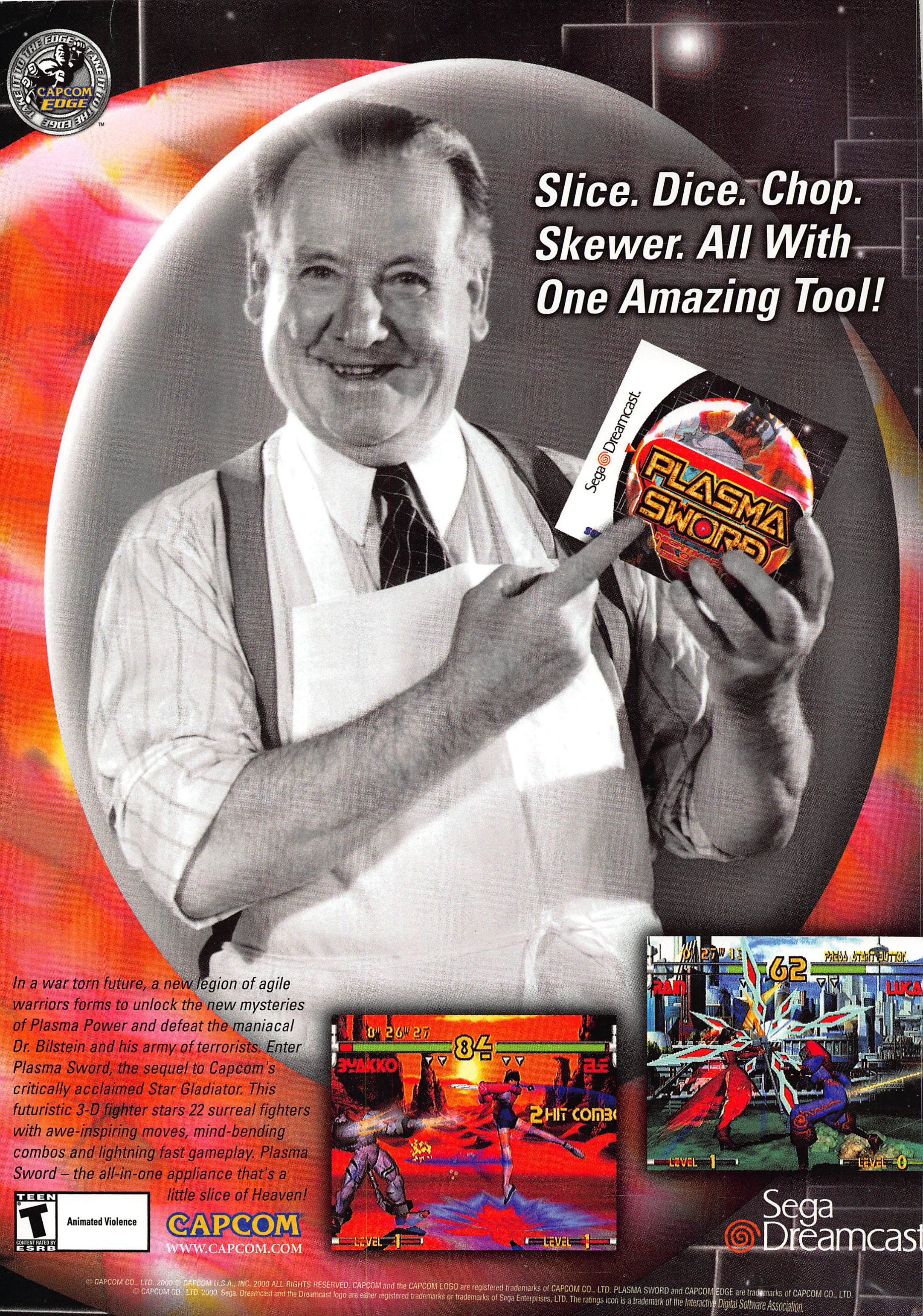
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